Superintendent Report to the Board of Education
Monday, June 23, 2025

Hello, Members of the Board, Staff and Community,

Welcome to the final board meeting of our fiscal year. We close out June one week from today, and we continue at a very brisk pace; we have not yet slowed down this summer. The public may not realize all of the programs, meetings, professional learning, and activities that occur in our schools during the summer. These two summer months are compressed, as we **close out the 2024-2025 school year and set the table for next year**. My thanks to all of our staff who continue to support and move important work forward during June and July.

The staff in this ESC building and our district administrative leadership team both met for **year-end updates, celebrations, and planning for our next steps.** We reviewed community priorities from our fall engagement efforts that will become the foundation for our strategic planning. We discussed initiatives moving forward, including our efforts to innovate and continue to clarify efficiencies to ensure we are maximizing resources to support student needs and opportunities as well as our strong commitment to improving staff compensation.

Our administrative leadership team spent an afternoon focused on learning more about **improving school communications, including practicing using ParentSquare**. School families should expect to begin receiving communication from this new tool that brings together school newsletters as well as individual communications from teachers, coaches, and activity sponsors in one place, provides two-way secure communication, two-way translation, and gives our parents some ability to choose how and when they receive information.

Principals of the Year

It was my honor to recognize our **Elementary Principal of the Year** Amanda Green, who has led Broken Arrow and Sunflower Elementary Schools, and our **Secondary Principal of the Year** Kady Carson, completing her successful first year at West Middle School after serving Billy Mills Middle School as assistant principal and athletic director. These two principals have led significant improvements in school climate and culture. Staff and parents from both schools praise these outstanding leaders for their focus on student learning and support. Special thanks to our LEAP partner Audra Fussell from Truity Credit Union for rewarding each of our Principals of the Year with $500.

Administrator Changes

We also **welcomed new administrators,** two from within our ranks and two who are joining our district - Billy Mills Middle School Assistant Principal Courtney Ellis; Free State Assistant Principal Adam Myer and Assistant Principal and Athletic Director Jason Schroeder, and Hillcrest Principal Christine Caffey.

We celebrated **administrators who are taking on new roles for us next year** - Jeremy Philipp, Southwest Middle School assistant principal and athletic director; Denise Johnson, interim Prairie Park principal; Sara Murray, Quail Run principal, Jason Kingman, assistant director of special education, and Tina Mitchell, director of equity and student and family engagement.

We are grateful to many team members from schools and across the district who served on many rounds of interviews to achieve the selections of these leadership candidates, and thanks to members of the Human Resources team who worked hard to organize multiple processes.

We also shared our appreciation and bade a fond farewell to **administrators who are moving on to other professional opportunities or retiring** - Hillcrest Principal Sarah Kruse, Prairie Park Principal Jason Townsend, Director of Secondary Schools Dr. Waymond Ervin, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Jana Craig-Hare, and Executive Director of Communications Julie Boyle.

To clarify, the recommendation of an Interim Principal at Sunset Hill for this 2025-26 year is congruent with steps we have consistently taken in the district when a principal position opens during the summer: Quail Run during this past summer 2024, and Prairie Park and Sunset Hill during this summer for this next school year. This approach is in keeping with our work to have bridge leadership in place to ensure a consistent and strong start to this fast-approaching school year, and also to allow time and opportunity for a robust principal search and selection process to involve teachers, parents and community that will begin in late fall. In this way, we will ensure the work moves forward at the school now, and also that there is adequate time and space for full engagement with the Sunset Hill staff, parents and

community and a recruitment process in place to ensure quality principal candidates for consideration.

As a result, the recommendation of Jennifer Georgie to serve as Interim Principal at Sunset Hill is based on the passion, skills, and abiding commitment to the success of ALL students; her breadth of experience prepares her to lead well during this next year as the interim principal at Sunset Hill. We are truly grateful for her willingness to serve alongside the strong Sunset Hill staff, parents, and community, as we look forward to a successful 2025 -26 school year.

Recognition of Julie Boyle, Executive Director Communications
Over 271/2 years Julie Boyle has added immense value to the Lawrence Public Schools organization; her work has made a positive and lasting impact on the lives of students and our school community. Julie's consistent support of students, teachers and school leaders, and her commitment to diligently and accurately tell the story of our neighborhood public schools has ensured that the stories of our students, teachers and classrooms shine brightly as a celebration of learning and the excellence of Lawrence Public Schools.

By our math, tonight represents approximately Board meeting #748 across Julie's career in covering schools; she has dedicated her life and career to keeping our community informed of the activities of classrooms, schools, the district, and of board discussions and actions.

We recently reached out to the Lawrence Schools Foundation, who partnered to mark Julie's extraordinary career and lasting legacy with the launching of the ***Julie Boyle Heart and Spirit Award.*** Created in honor of Julie Boyle, this award recognizes an individual who exemplifies the same big heart, unwavering dedication, and passionate commitment to children, schools, and the broader community that Jule has demonstrated throughout her remarkable career. The Julie Boyle Heart and Spirit Award champions those who uplift and support our schools and community with kindness, enthusiasm, and an enduring spirit of service.

Julie, thank you; our Lawrence Public Schools and our Lawrence community, are better for your service here, and we are most grateful.

Lawrence Public Schools Board of Education Marches in Parades
I want to thank our board for allowing me to join in participating during the last two weekends in the **Lawrence Pride and Juneteenth parades**. It was wonderful being out 'in' the Lawrence community together, and to connect with children, families and community members. These were important occasions to share with our community our ongoing strong commitment to the achievement, success, and human rights of every student.

Deepest Sympathies
I want to publicly **share our sympathies** with the family of Lawrence High student Isaiah Ferguson, including members of our Lawrence High School family who join them in their grief. Associate Principal Mike Gillman shares that Isaiah was an enthusiastic participant in

both the LHS band and track team and was loved for his bright smile and the uplifting spirit he brought to everyone around him. Principal Dr. Quentin Rials said it well to please “remind students they are not alone - we are all here to support one another.”

Welcome Cole Amaya

Following the Board’s consideration this evening, we will share the selection of Cole Amaya as assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, effective July 1, 2025. Amaya is completing his second year as director of secondary diploma+ and curriculum and instructional programs in the Kansas City, Kansas, school district, where he also served as a high school principal, assistant principal, and instructional coach for seven years.

The assistant superintendent position is part of an administrative realignment and restructuring as our district prioritizes directing resources to support student needs and improve staff compensation. Amaya will work primarily with classroom teacher leaders in overseeing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment functions that support the district’s critical teaching and learning mission.

We are delighted to welcome Cole Amaya, a proven leader who demonstrates a commitment to quality learning, and opportunities for **all** students, he has lived that commitment through his record of service. Mr. Amaya’s experience in inspiring a culture of teaching and learning, collaborating to improve practice through working alongside gifted teacher leaders and principals in schools as well as his skills in the adept use of data and strengthening of systems to inform the work make him a strong selection for Lawrence Public Schools. We are fortunate to add Cole Amaya to Team Lawrence Public Schools and look forward to welcoming him in July.

Thanks to the many individuals on our team who gave their time to serve over multiple rounds of interviews during a robust selection process that has extended through June.

Summer Meals for Students

Continue to sign up for **free summer meal kits for children**. Our Nutrition and Wellness and Facilities and Operations staff are doing a great job of distributing breakfast and lunch meal kits to families and organizations that serve children.

Additionally, all district buildings that do not have scheduled summer activities will be closed to the public from June 30 through July 7. This gives our twelve-month employees some flexibility, and encourages them to use their earned leave to take a break this summer. It also supports our Facilities and Operations staff in performing maintenance, repair, and upgrades in our buildings.

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

Sincerely,

Jeanice Kerr Swift

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Superintendent of Schools
Lawrence Public Schools