



USD 497 News Release

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Lawrence Board of Education Annual Organizational Meeting

Recognition

Monday's Lawrence Board of Education meeting marked the first scheduled meeting of the fiscal year. Superintendent Dr. Swift welcomed Dr. Cole Amaya as the new Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. "Dr. Amaya demonstrates a commitment to quality learning and to opportunities for all students," Dr. Swift said. "His experience in inspiring a culture of teaching and learning...have prepared him well for leadership here in Lawrence Public Schools," she concluded. Dr. Amaya most recently served in a leadership role at Kansas City Kansas Public Schools.

Additionally, Tina Mitchell was recognized for her 25 years of exemplary service in Lawrence Public Schools and welcomed to her new role as the district's Director of Equity and Student and Family Engagement. "We are all educational leaders driven by equity, and now Ms. Mitchell will bring our work together." Most recently Mitchell served as the assistant principal at Lawrence Free State High School for three years and also served as a Counselor at Free State High School. "It became clear that Mrs. Mitchell was the right leader at the right time for this role," Dr. Swift remarked.

Each leader greeted the board. "I am very much looking forward to partnering with schools and stepping into this role and working with our community," Tina Mitchell said to the board. "I look forward to serving the Lawrence Public Schools district and moving work forward for teaching and learning," remarked Dr. Amaya.

Election of President and Vice President

Member GR Gordon-Ross was elected and affirmed as president of the board. "I'm honored to build on the work I've contributed for more than seven and a half years on the board - including this past year as vice president - and I'm excited to bring my own perspective to the presidency. Our district is moving in a positive direction," said Gordon-Ross.

The school board elected Bob Byers as Vice President, after nominations of both Bob Byers and Yolanda Franklin. Byers previously served on the board from 2009-2013, and again by appointment in 2014-2015.

Superintendent's Report

In addition to highlighting district updates and staff honors, Superintendent Dr. Jeanice Kerr Swift shared the following:

- Dr. Swift recognized our staff for a successful Extended School Year (ESY) summer program that served 173 students over the previous four weeks. She also noted Disability Pride Month, saying "As a district we are proud to serve students of all abilities." She continued, "Our goal is to ensure a quality teacher in front of every child."
- The district's **Free Summer Meals for Kids** program will continue through July. Pre-register and learn more on the district's [summer meals website](#).

- Dr. Swift previewed back-to-school dates, highlighting the upcoming 2nd annual **Kids Expo**, hosted by Lawrence Schools Foundation on Saturday, August 9th at the Educational Support Center (110 McDonald Drive).
- Back-to-school information, including the 2025-2026 Elementary School Supply Lists, can be found over the coming days on the district website: www.usd497.org/back-to-school.

Read and [watch](#) the full Superintendent's Report online.

LPS Funds Currently Impacted by the Federal Funding Freeze

The superintendent shared information about FY25 allocations to illustrate and share the impact of the federal freeze on funding; the following numbers, prepared by Cynde Frick, Executive Director, Finance, are intended to help with understanding:

- Title II - \$309,310
- Title III - \$63,185
- Title IV - \$95,656

Total - \$468,151

Regarding the federal funds hold, president Kelly said, "Consider that the dollars were allocated by Congress in March and *affirmed* by the President shortly thereafter: Districts across America budgeted accordingly based on the federal government's legal obligation to distribute that funding. With very little explanation, they pulled the funding at the last minute, and districts everywhere are left scrambling."

"When we consider the freezing of these federal funds, we know the importance of these resources in providing real-time support for our students," said Dr. Swift. "While federal funds for programming may be on 'pause,' our children do not have time to wait. Our students are counting on us," she added.

View the [full document](#) on the LPS Funds Currently Impacted by the Federal Funding Freeze online.

Consent Agenda

In addition to the election of new board President and Vice President, the Board also attended to policy updates, several business items listed on its consent agenda, including annual renewals and other district business.

Read the [full meeting agenda](#) online.

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LPS Funds Currently Impacted by the Federal Funding Freeze*



\$309,310

TITLE II

Supports recruitment, preparation, training, and retention of effective teachers and principals.

TITLE III

Supports language instruction for English learners, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

\$63,185

\$95,656

TITLE IV

Supports activities that improve learning conditions, technology, and student success and well-being.

\$468,151

Total

*FY25 allocations used to determine this information as FY26 allocations are not yet available.