



Arkansas City Public Schools

BOE BRIEFS

An informal report from the Board of Education Meeting

October 27, 2025

Celebrating Good News

USD 470 celebrated several achievements this month. The Arkansas City Middle School KAY Club was honored with the 2025 Joe B. Avery Community Spirit Award for its service projects and commitment to community leadership. Club sponsors Rakiyah Taylor and Jeff Shaw shared highlights of recent activities and upcoming initiatives for the school year.

Communications Director Alisha Call received the 2025 Distinguished Service Award from the Kansas School Public Relations Association (KanSPRA) for outstanding contributions to school communications statewide.

The district also recognized its September Top DAWGS, employees who go above and beyond to support students, colleagues, and the community: Linda Enderud (Registrar, ACHS), Miguel Castenada (Custodian, ACMS), Jennifer Morse (Gifted Teacher, ACHS), and Adrianna Wingert (Pre-K Teacher, Roosevelt Elementary).

AEMI Mold Report

Steve Moreland with Air & Environmental Management Inc. (AEMI) presented findings from recent indoor air quality and mold testing conducted at Arkansas City Middle School. Testing confirmed that air quality levels are within safe standards, and identified areas previously affected by moisture that have since been cleaned and treated. Preventive measures, including ongoing monitoring and HVAC maintenance, are being implemented to ensure continued air quality and building health.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Hirings:

- Lilian Cibilis – SAT at Adams
- Jaden Helms – Head Girls Wrestling Coach at ACHS
- I'zhayla Kinnard – SAT at C-4
- John Schwintz – Custodian at ACMS

- Cindymarie Townsend – SAT at C-4

Resignations/Retirements:

- Sarah Gepner – SAT at C-4

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Board heard public comments from Jason Howerton and Sarah Murphy.
- The Board accepted \$500 for the ACHS Band Trip from Rick and Valerie Rush as well as the \$4,867.14 Hometown Project from the Ponca City Lowes.
- Arkansas City Middle School students and staff shared updates highlighting learning, leadership, and growth. Gifted education facilitator Cristine Noland discussed expanded project-based learning opportunities and increased collaboration with families and staff. Chablise Milby, ESOL teacher and coordinator, shared the continued growth of ACMS's English learner population and the success of programs designed to support multilingual students and their families.
- Dr. Ron Sarnacki provided an update on special education services and staffing across the Cowley County Special Education Cooperative. He highlighted the critical roles of paraprofessionals and school psychologists in supporting students' academic, behavioral, and emotional needs. The report emphasized the continued statewide and regional challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified special education personnel. Dr. Sarnacki also reviewed cooperative bylaws and evaluation procedures for staff assigned to member districts.
- The Board approved updated job descriptions and evaluation forms for fall and winter supplemental positions. These updates align evaluation criteria with district goals, professional standards, and Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) and Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) guidelines. The effort reflects USD 470's continued focus on clarity, consistency, and alignment across staff roles and performance expectations.
- District and building administrators shared first-quarter updates on the bell-to-bell phone-free policy implemented this year. Both students and staff have reported improved focus, engagement, and classroom climate. During the first quarter, ACHS recorded 158 violations, while ACMS recorded 26, reflecting stronger consistency and accountability compared to previous years. Additional staff training on policy enforcement will be provided during the upcoming district in-service on Nov. 10 to continue promoting a positive, distraction-free learning environment.
- Safety and Security Coordinator Eric Burr shared the first-quarter safety update, noting a sharp drop in vape-related incidents compared to last year. Increased visibility, routine door and parking lot checks, and quick responses to vape

sensor alerts have strengthened campus safety. Burr also highlighted student-led groups such as Hope Squad, SADD, and YELL for their work in promoting mental health and safe choices.

- Assistant Superintendent Braden Smith shared updates from the district's recent KESA School Improvement presentation to the Kansas State Department of Education. The report highlighted strong progress in standards alignment, structured literacy implementation, and tiered systems of support. KSDE staff commended the district for its clear plan, effective data use, and unified approach across schools. The district will continue building on these efforts through professional learning, balanced assessment practices, and family engagement strategies focused on attendance and student success.
- Assistant Superintendent Will Pfannenstiel reviewed transportation and vehicle needs for Fiscal Year 2026. The district plans to replace two route buses, two activity buses, and several support and maintenance vehicles to improve safety, reliability, and efficiency. The business office is also evaluating options for a new warehouse forklift and potential Head Start vehicle replacements. Funding sources and purchase recommendations will be brought to the Board at a future meeting.