

## **Board Notes — October 27, 2025**

A meeting of the Board of Education of Newton Unified School District 373 convened in open and public session at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, October 27, 2025, in the Board of Education meeting room located at 308 E 1<sup>st</sup>, Newton, KS.

**Members Present:** Ian Long, Mallory Morton, Andy Ortiz, Melissa Schreiber, Dayna Steinmetz, Erica Stevens

**Others Present:** Superintendent Fred Van Ranken, Assistant Superintendent Joe Sample, Director of Business/Human Resources Jane Nichols, Administrative Assistant/Board Clerk Joni Jantz, and Director of Communications Carly Stavola

### **1. Opening of Meeting**

Melissa Schreiber called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Melissa Schreiber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

— Adopt the agenda as presented.

### **2. Presentations/Reports**

#### **KSDE Assessment Cut Score Development**

Nova Latta presented on changes in the KSDE cut scores for the ELA assessment. She reported that the standards nor the rigor of the assessments have been lowered.

### **3. Comments from the Public**

#### **Public Comment**

No comments.

### **4. Executive Session**

#### **Convene in Executive Session - Personnel**

— Move that the board convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel pursuant to the KOMA exception regarding personnel matters on non-elected personnel and that the board return to the open meeting in this room at 7:30 p.m. Fred Van Ranken is invited to join a portion of the executive session.

Superintendent Van Ranken joined the executive session at 7:22 p.m.

— Move that the board convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel pursuant to the KOMA exception regarding personnel matters on non-elected personnel and that the board return to the open meeting in this room at 7:41 p.m.

— Move that the board convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel pursuant to the KOMA exception regarding personnel matters on non-elected personnel and that the board return to the open meeting in this room at 7:50 p.m.

### **5. Public Comment – added with motion to amend agenda**

— Move to approve amending the agenda to add a public comment time for bond related comments.

Steven Tieszen and Sara Getchell addressed the board regarding the bond.

### **6. Consent Agenda**

The board voted to:

— Approve the October 13, 2025 minutes as presented.

- Approve the bills as presented.
- Approve the October 27, 2025 Personnel Report as presented.

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Hire	Resignation/ Termination
Merrill	Lisa	Asst Food Service Director	NHS	10/9/2025		x
Martin	Abigail	SL Sped. Ed. Teacher	SB	5/22/2026		x
Hosch	Alexis	Social Worker	SS	10/30/2025		x
Bahruth	Kirstyn	Sp. Ed. Para	HCSEC	10/23/2025	x	
Miller	Jade	Sp. Ed. Para	Cooper	10/23/2025	x	
Bigham	Tess	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	10/21/2025	x	
Holle	Ashley	Sp. Ed. Para	HCSEC	10/16/2025	x	
Potluri	Colin	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	10/15/2025	x	
Bair	Chelsea	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	10/14/2025	x	
Tobias	Makayla	Administrative Assistant	SS	10/14/2025	x	
Watkins	Ashley	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	10/13/2025	x	
Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Change of Assignment/Transfer	
Bratcher	Massiah	Reg. Ed. Aide	SF	10/6/2025	Sp. Ed. Para @ SF	
Merrill	Desiree	Reg. Ed. Aide	SS	10/13/2025	Sp. Ed. Para @ Cooper	
Lewis	Melissa	Sp. Ed. Para	SB	9/2/2025	From 33.75 hrs/wk to 35 hrs/wk	
Derome	Kayla	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	8/21/2025	From 33.75 hrs/wk to 35 hrs/wk	
Miller	Lara	Sp. Ed. Para	Cooper	10/13/2025	Sp. Ed. Para @ SC	
Davis	Brilee	Sp. Ed. Para	NHS	10/15/2025	From 16.25 hrs/wk to 33.75 hrs/wk	
Heddin	Matthew	Food Service	NHS	10/15/2025	Asst Food Service Director @ NHS	
Cooper	Rebecca	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	10/23/2025	Add SPED Homebound Provider	
Morrison	Kelsi	Food Service	CMS	9/29/2025	From 3.25 hrs/day to 2 hrs/day	
Warzeka	Nicole	Autism Coordinator	SB	10/1/2025	Add Athletic Worker	

Resignation/Termination/Transfer/Change of Assignment shall be deemed accepted upon approval of this report by the Board of Education.

- Approve becoming a member of the BuyBoard Purchasing Cooperative.

## 7. Old Business

The board voted to:

- Approve revised board policy DFH Fundraising Activities as presented.

## Bond Update

The board discussed the voting method for the March bond vote. After discussion, there was consensus to proceed with in person voting. This is a cost savings compared to having a mail in ballot. In person voting does allow for requesting an absentee ballot.

The board discussed options for using leftover Santa Fe bond dollars. More information will be gathered on this as far as what other improvements could be covered that were previously suggested.

Also discussed was changing the ballot language to reflect areas of highest need first.

## 8. New Business

The board voted to:

— Approve gift requests as presented.

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
Thomas McCabe, DMD	Newton High School	Student of the Month	810.00
Millennium Machine & Tool	Newton High School Machining Program	Student supplies & Skills USA reg.	\$5,000.00
Conrade Insurance	Newton High School RaileRobotics	Travel and supply expenses	\$500.00
Larry Black	USD 373	Pay off school lunch debt	\$831.98

### Gifts Under \$500: For Information Only

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
Trinity Heights Church	Newton High School	Supplies for teachers	\$450.00
Lefty's Garage	Newton High School Machining	Student supplies & Skills USA reg.	\$30.00
Ray Redger	Newton High School Machining	Student supplies & Skills USA reg.	\$40.00
Roofing Services Unlimited	Newton High School RaileRobotics	Travel and supply expenses	\$150.00
Miller Insurance	Newton High School RaileRobotics	Travel and supply expenses	\$100.00
Full Vision	Newton High School RaileRobotics	Travel and supply expenses	\$250.00
Bridges	Newton High School RaileRobotics	Travel and supply expenses	\$100.00

— Approve the four NHS hardship diploma requests as presented.

— Approve early graduation requests for Newton High School as presented.

### Direction of USD 373 Food Service

Superintendent Van Ranken presented options for the board to consider regarding the future of USD 373 Food Service. Director Elaine Gaeddert agreed to continue her position this year as there were no qualified food service applicants. If the district were to move to contracting food service, there is a lengthy process to go through. There was board consensus to explore contracted services and administration will bring back more information to present to the board.

### Market Compensation Study

Superintendent Van Ranken presented a proposal from Educational Management Solutions (EMS) to do a wage study as a result of recent meetings with a classified retention group. The board consented to move forward with this study by EMS.

— Move that we allow Mr. Brian Becker to liquidate the gymnastics and weight room equipment as presented with proceeds going into capital outlay.

## 9. Reports

### BOE Committee Reports

Ian Long provided another sketch of the Santa Fe mural design. Board members had discussion and want to make sure that it represents the original intent of the committee. No decision was made at this time on next steps.

Ian and Superintendent Van Ranken will be attending a Themian Park Stakeholder meeting on November 6.

### Building Reports

Building reports for Santa Fe 5/6 Center, Chisholm Middle, Newton High School, Opportunity Academy and USD 373 Athletics were provided to the board for information.

## **10. Closing of Meeting**

### **Board Comments**

Comments included:

- Ericia Stevens asked a clarifying question on maintenance costs in relation to the bond.
- Andy Ortiz mentioned that the students leading tours at the bond meetings last week did an excellent job and he was impressed with their leadership.
- Ian Long encouraged everyone to get out and vote on November 4.

### **Adjournment**

Move to adjourn at 8:50 p.m.

Background information on agenda items may be found in BoardDocs at:  
<https://go.boarddocs.com/ks/usd373/Board.nsf/Public>