



USD 497 News Release

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Lawrence Public Schools Shares 2025-26 School Year Enrollment Data

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Swift shared a wide range of updates and highlights from throughout Lawrence Public Schools, including:

- Our **Let's LIFT Lawrence** initiative continues to showcase the extraordinary ways our community partners come together to support one another and ensure no family goes without essential support. Requests for additional meal kits and pantry items came from several schools last week. Staff members, alongside business partners with the Lawrence Schools Foundation, quickly stepped forward delivery of meal kits and shelf-stable items to stock up in those locations of additional need. We will continue to ensure that **all pantries will be fully stocked for families ahead of fall break**. A district web page continues to be updated (www.usd497.org/lift), which includes 12 recipes tested and developed by the district's Wellness and Nutrition team (see: "[Pantry Cookbook](#).")
- Last week, **schools across Lawrence honored the legacy of Ruby Bridges**, marking 65 years since her courageous walk into William Frantz Elementary. At Quail Run Elementary School, students decorated their own Ruby Bridges shoes to honor the steps that she, and so many others, have taken to ensure school is a place for everyone.
- Under the leadership of Culinary Teacher Rose Berry, and in partnership with Kansas State University dietetic interns Madison Lowen and Kate Ralston, **Lawrence High School students competed in an original sauce competition** while exploring the nutritional standards governing school meals. Their sauces were flavorful, compliant with federal guidelines, and appealing to student tastes. The schoolwide tasting event drew enthusiastic participation, and the winning sauce, "Chesty's Chicken Sauce," developed by Jory, Kemper, and Saylor, will be added to the spring lunch menu.
- Woodlawn Elementary Principal Brandon Daley, Sunflower Elementary Principal Amanda Green, and Director of Elementary Schools Jayci Roberson are participating in a year-long **AASA National Early Learning Cohort**. Alongside early learning leaders from across the country, their work includes touring early childhood sites, observing school district demonstrations, and engaging in collaborative learning. They recently participated in the cohort's November meeting as well as a Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools site visit. The visit reinforced what is possible when early childhood, K-12, and community support function as one system.

- Board President Gordon-Ross, Members Cadue-Blackwood, Franklin, and Kimball, participated in the **Ad Astra – Aim Beyond conference hosted by Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB)** over this past weekend in Wichita. Topics ranged from school finance, legal and regulatory issues in education, boardsmanship, Artificial Intelligence, and communication. Member Kimball led several sessions, respective to her important advocacy role and work for KASB.

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

2025-26 Annual Student Enrollment

Director of Data and Assessment James Polk provided a comprehensive reporting of the district’s audited annual student enrollment status for the 2025-26 school year. As projected, the Lawrence Public Schools 2025-26 enrollment is 2% lower than last school year. The current number of students served is 10,148 total in comparison from the 2024-25 year total of 10,358.

This change in enrollment mirrors similar declines across Kansas and nationally.

Preschool enrollment has increased by almost 20%, most elementary buildings are at a comfortable capacity, and middle and high schools have capacity to grow.

At this time, the district is not recommending any reconfigurations, repurposes, or closures of school buildings, but instead remains focused on:

- Meeting greater levels of student need and ensuring student supports
- Enhancing program offerings and opportunities including elementary science and enrichment, middle school enhancements, and postsecondary assets, CTE pathways, and opportunities
- Creating greater intentionality and focused work for streamlining the organization
- Prioritizing resources directly to classrooms, enhancing programming opportunities, and ensuring competitive compensation for staff

Consent Agenda

The board approved a consent agenda of disposal and sale of obsolete athletic equipment and uniforms; personnel report; monthly vouchers; and meeting minutes from November 10 (consent agenda was approved with a 4-0 vote).

Reports & Board Commentary

President Gordon-Ross and Member Shannon Kimball provided insight into the professional development session at the recent Ad Astra – Aim Beyond Conference hosted by KASB in Wichita.

The Facilities Advisory Committee recently met and noted the support of 1,336 events successfully held in Lawrence Public Schools’ facilities. The committee also noted that hiring an in-house plumber has saved needed funds within our facilities

Access a link to the [full meeting agenda](#) online.

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