



USD 497 News Release

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Lawrence Public Schools Shares Part II of its Annual Enrollment Report

Superintendent's Report

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

- As part of recent **community engagement** efforts, Dr. Swift visited the Lawrence Farmers Market during its season wrap-up on Nov. 22, where she spoke with rising Kindergarten families, current students, parents, staff, and community members. Events like this offer opportunities for direct, meaningful, and quality connections that differ from formal meetings.
- Low brass musicians from Lawrence Public Schools, the University of Kansas, and the broader community gathered for **Brassmas 2025 at the Lied Center of Kansas**. The event brought together 150 musicians, ranging in age from 12 to 84, for a spirited program that included a featured performance by the KU Tuba/Euphonium Consort and a lineup of holiday favorites to kick off December. The concert ensemble was conducted by David Earll, tuba and euphonium professor at the University of Kansas. The district is grateful to its music educators for inspiring students and providing exceptional experiences performing on one of the premier stages in the Midwest.
- The **Kennedy Early Childhood Center recently honored a school family with an active-duty Army parent** spending their last day in Lawrence before an overseas deployment and the family's move out of state. Maj. Kevin Ohrlund of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, father of a Kennedy student, received a heartfelt send-off organized by teacher Donna Lang. Teachers, staff, and students lined the hallway from Mrs. Lang's classroom to the front entrance, waving American flags, streamers and signs to wish the family well. The district shared its gratitude for Maj. Ohrlund's service and the family's sacrifice and extended warm wishes for their safety, success and new opportunities ahead.
- **Free State High School's Theatre Troupe 5773 has been selected to perform *The Addams Family School Edition* at the 2026 Kansas Thespian Festival**, a recognition that reflects the talent, dedication, and artistry of the students and staff members. Productions invited to the festival undergo a rigorous review process, making this honor a significant testament to the excellence of the Firebird performing arts program. To celebrate, Free State will host a home performance of *The Addams Family School Edition* at 2 p.m. Jan. 4 in the school auditorium. The troupe will then perform Jan. 9 at Wichita's Century II Concert Hall, representing the school and community on one of Kansas' premier theatre stages. The

district is proud of the student performers, technicians, pit musicians, and educators who bring these productions to life.

- On Dec. 4, **Lawrence High School art students showcased their work at the 29th annual High School Visual Arts Competition**, joining students from 14 area high schools at the Tim Murphy Gallery in Merriam, Kansas. Hundreds of students, families, and community members gathered for the awards ceremony, where Lawrence High students swept the 2D category, with Kaiea Blum earning third place and Wren Jay receiving both second and first place. In the 3D category, students Piper Journey and Jayden Moore took first and second place, respectively. The exhibition remains open for public viewing through Dec. 27.
- With December's arrival, the district experienced its first wave of **winter weather** last week, prompting several communications through ParentSquare, including notification of a phone outage Monday, Dec. 1, and the cancellation of all after-school practices, events and activities later that day. School families and staff members are encouraged to update their contact information and ensure they **review [the district's inclement weather procedures](#)**. School cancellation and schedule-adjustment decisions are communicated as early as possible through ParentSquare, the district website, social media, and local media outlets. Dr. Swift thanked the Facilities and Operations team for their efforts to keep up with winter weather, and always working around the clock to ensure a safe opening of schools. Last week, we observed a great return of investment on the board's approval to purchase snow removal equipment, as our teams were able to complete their snow clearing work in far less time, making schools safer for everyone.
- As the district looks ahead to 2026 and begins planning for the 2026–27 school year, **Dr. Swift announced the addition of preschool classrooms at Deerfield and Prairie Park elementary schools**. These campuses will join Sunflower and Woodlawn, where early childhood expansion began this year, as well as existing programs at New York Montessori and the Kennedy Early Childhood Center. With these additions, the district will offer preschool at six school sites, reaching the halfway mark in providing preschool opportunities across its elementary schools.

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

2025-26 Annual Student Enrollment Part II

Director of Data and Assessment James Polk provided a second portion to the Lawrence Public Schools **[2025 Annual Enrollment Report](#)**, which focused on the district's class sizes and movement of students in and out of the district. The district reported the following:

- 94% of elementary class sizes are enrolled at 27 or fewer students; elementary classes at K-1 average 20 students; 5th grade average 23 students.
- 94% of middle school core classrooms are enrolled at fewer than 30 students, with a class size average of 25 students.
- High school class sizes remain consistent over prior years with an average of 24-26 students. There is a reduction in the number of high school classes enrolled at 18 or fewer students this year representing intentional work to improve efficiencies.

- Approximately 5% of students are enrolled from outside the district: 1% attend 16 of 17 physical school buildings, and 4% attend the Lawrence Virtual School.
- More students are entering Lawrence Public Schools than are exiting the district.

These class size numbers represent stability or improvement and are a result of an intentional, focused effort to eliminate multi-grade classrooms and prioritize and protect elementary class sizes overall. Lawrence Public Schools remains committed to focusing work to achieve its critical mission and ensure opportunities for students while also streamlining and aligning resources to improve competitive compensation.

Part I of the [2025 Annual Enrollment Report](#) can be viewed here.

Consent Agenda

The board approved a consent agenda of equipment and uniform purchases; remediation and repair costs of a Lawrence High School locker room; replacement of the fire alarm system at Cordley Elementary school; personnel report; monthly vouchers; and meeting minutes of the November 17 board meeting. (consent agenda was approved with a 5-0 vote).

Reports & Board Commentary

President Gordon-Ross and Vice President Bob Byers shared that the Negotiations Team recently met to continue their important work alongside school staff members. Vice President Byers also noted that both the District Site Council and Equity Advisory committees met. Past President Kelly Jones provided a Policy Committee update.

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

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