

Board Notes — February 23, 2026

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, February 23, 2026, in the Board of Education meeting room located at 308 E 1st, Newton, KS.

Members Present: Bob Diepenbrock, Ian Long, Rachel McDaniel, Mallory Morton, Melissa Schreiber, Erica Stevens

Members Absent: Heidi Hoskinson

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

Ian Long called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Ian Long led the Pledge of Allegiance.

— Adopt the agenda as presented.

2. Comments from the Public

Public Comment

Lynnette Redington advised of an upcoming Poverty Simulation that the Harvey County Food and Farm Council is sponsoring on March 26 and invited board members to participate.

3. Executive Session

Convene in Executive Session - Personnel

—Move that the board convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing issues concerning an employee pursuant to the KOMA exception regarding personnel matters of non-elected personnel and that the board return to the open meeting in this room at 7:15 p.m. Fred Van Ranken and Jane Nichols are invited to join the executive session.

Convene in Executive Session - Negotiations

—Move that the board convene in executive session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations pursuant to the KOMA exception regarding employer-employee negotiations and that the board return to the open meeting in this room at 7:26 p.m.
—Move to amend the motion to include Fred Van Ranken and Jane Nichols joining the executive session.

4. Consent Agenda

The board voted to:

— Approve the February 9, 2026 minutes as presented.

— Approve the bills as presented.

— Approve the February 23, 2026 Personnel Report as presented.

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Hire	Resignation/ Termination
Guest	Robert	Asst. Track Coach	CMS	2/9/2026		x
DeMartino	Emily	6th Gr. Science/SS Tchr	SF	5/22/2026		x

Laswell	LuAnn	Sp. Ed. Para	SC	5/21/2026		x
Griffis	Lorelei	Sp. Ed. Para	CMS	2/10/2026		x
Miller	Noah	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	2/20/2026		x
Salas	Samuel	Asst. Baseball Coach	NHS	2/16/2026		x
May	Jessica	5th Gr. Math Teacher	SF	5/22/2026		x
Shy	Jeffrey	2nd Shift Custodian	NHS	2/20/2026		x
Schepmann	Lindsay	Sp. Ed. Para	SB	2/17/2026	x	
Folsom	Kevin	Sp. Ed. Para	CMS	2/17/2026	x	
Norris	Nathan	Maintenance	Service Center	2/16/2026	x	
Rose	Tori	Pre-K Teacher	Cooper	8/1/2026	x	
Padilla-Marchany	Peter	Bus Aide	Transportation	2/10/2026	x	
Curry II	Torrie	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	2/10/2026	x	
Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Change of Assignment/Transfer	
Kernal	DesiRay	Bus Aide	Transportation	2/10/2026	Add Athletic Event Worker	
Abramowich	Nicholaus	Night Lead Custodian	NHS	2/12/2026	Groundskeeper @ Service Ctr	
Rankin	Heather	1st Shift Floater Custodian	Service Center	2/13/2026	1st Shift Custodian @ Cooper	

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

— Approve the ESSDACK Virtual Student Invoice as presented.

5. Old Business

District Goal Area 1 Review – Core Instruction

Superintendent Van Ranken and Joe Sample provided an in-depth review of Goal Area 1—Core Instruction. Information was provided on the Professional Learning Community (PLC) work that began in the fall of 2024.

Food Service Discussion

Superintendent Van Ranken provided information regarding the potential shift to a contracted food service company versus hiring a director. A group of staff and students visited two different districts using different food service companies. Board members asked questions about how current food service employees will be affected. There is a lengthy bid process to switch to a food service company and so administration will be wanting to know if the board supports this change at the March 9 board meeting.

6. New Business

The board voted to:

— Approve the gift requests as presented.

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
Anonymous	Newton High School - FFA	Travel and meal expenses	\$1,500.00

Gifts Under \$500: For Information Only

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
Lehman Ag	Newton High School Machining	Donation for Skills USA fees	\$200.00

Potential Proposal from Harvey County

Harvey County Administrator Kevin Frymire has inquired about the possibility of leasing the Walton facility while the courthouse is undergoing a 2-3 year remodel. Board members supported inviting Mr. Frymire to a board meeting for further information and discussion.

7. Reports

BOE Committee Reports

Ericia attended a recent Technology Committee meeting. Mallory reported on Head Start and the uncertainties at the federal level. The next meeting for the HS policy council is March 2. Ian reported that the next PBC meeting is scheduled for March 9.

Building and Department Reports

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

8. Closing of Meeting

Board Comments

Comments included:

- Appreciated the information provided on the Professional Learning Communities and work being done by staff to improve teaching and learning in the district.
- Recognized student success in many areas, a lot of community support at basketball games, many spring activities beginning and the NHS musical is scheduled for March 6 and 7.
- The Chamber is hosting a legislative session at McKinley on Saturday, February 28, 9:00 a.m.
- KASB annually hosts *Day at the Statehouse* which provides a great opportunity for board members to visit with legislators. It is set for March 11, 9:00am-4:00pm. Let Fred or Joni know if you are interested in attending.
- Superintendent Van Ranken will resend an invitation from City Manager Daniela Rivas regarding the Reinvestment Housing Incentive Districts (RHID) Information work session on March 10, 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Move to adjourn at 9:07 p.m.

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