

## Board Notes — March 9, 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, March 9, 2026, in the Board of Education meeting room located at 308 E 1<sup>st</sup>, Newton, KS.

**Members Present:** Bob Diepenbrock, Ian Long, Rachel McDaniel, Ericia Stevens  
Mallory Morton arrived at 7:49 p.m.

**Members Absent:** Heidi Hoskinson and Melissa Schreiber

**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 7:00 p.m.

Ian Long led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Amend the agenda moving item 5 C. to the March 23, 2026 meeting.
- Adopt the agenda as amended.

### 2. Presentations/Reports

#### Student and Staff Recognition

Chisholm Middle School teacher, Kim Tate, was recognized for being named a Kansas Master Teacher. Also recognized were NHS students Ady Klug, Madison Burford, Chase Dirks, Gabriel Hernandez for placing at the state powerlifting competition and Tanner Scott placing 3<sup>rd</sup> at State Diving.

#### Ag Academy Presentation

Ryan Kopper, Liz Gunn and four Ag Academy high school students presented on their Project Based Learning PSA projects.

#### USD 373 Employee Service Awards

The district recognized those staff that have 5-year work anniversaries in March 2026.

- Sandra Lembke-Beckham: Paraeducator, Sunset Elementary 10 years

### 3. Comments from the Public

#### Public Comment

Carol Sue Stayrook Hobbs thanked district staff, Board of Education members and the community for all the work on the bond proposal and passing the bond.

### 4. Consent Agenda

The board voted to:

- Approve the February 23, 2026 minutes as presented.
- Approve the bills as presented.
- Approve the January 2026 Report of Funds.
- Approve the March 9, 2026 Personnel Report as presented.

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Hire	Resignation/ Termination
Church	Denise	Admin Assistant	ETC	5/1/2026		x
Thompson	Shealeese	Reg. Ed. Aide	Cooper	3/12/2026		x

Buhler	Katie	6th Gr. ELA Teacher	SF	5/22/2026		x
Reimer	Valerie	Interventionist	Sunset	8/1/2026	x	
Vogt	Nicole	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	3/9/2026	x	
Abrego Delcid	Nelly	2nd Shift Custodian	NHS	3/5/2026	x	
Whitlock	Amy	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	5/23/2026	x	
Thaw	Toria	7th Gr. Science Tchr	CMS	8/1/2026	x	
Houseberg	Kris	7-12 Teacher	OA	8/1/2026	x	
Ratt	Esther	Reg. Ed. Aide	OA	2/26/2026	x	
Dawson	Kylee	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	2/24/2026	x	
Smith	Cile	2nd Shift Custodian	CMS	2/24/2026	x	
Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Change of Assignment/Transfer	
Ashmore	Darrin	8th Gr. Science Teacher	CMS	8/1/2026	Careers & Life Planning Tchr @ CMS	
Cooper	Rebecca	Sub/Homebound Provider	District-Wide	12/22/2025	Remove Sp Ed Homebound Provider	
Hefling	Kylie	4th Gr. Teacher/Coach	NR	2/12/2026	Add Asst. Softball Coach @ NHS	
Boller	Jacob	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	3/2/2026	Add Asst. Girls Soccer Coach@NHS	
Morlan	Theresa	Math Teacher	NHS	3/2/2026	Add Asst. Girls Swim Coach@NHS	
Blackwell	Narissa	Sp. Ed. Para	NHS	3/1/2026	Add Asst. Track Coach @ CMS	
Baeza	Lorraina	2nd Shift Custodian	CMS	3/2/2026	Night Shift Lead Custodian @ NHS	
Norris	Kai	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	3/3/2026	From 11 hrs/week to 13 hrs/week	
August	Cedric	Sp. Ed. Para	NR	2/2/2026	Sp. Ed. Para @ SS	
Cheney	Aryn	Permanent Building Sub	SF	8/1/2026	Substitute Teacher @ District-Wide	
Jantzi	Scott	Sp. Ed. Teacher/Coach	CMS	3/1/2026	Add Asst. Baseball Coach @ NHS	
Ramos-Thaw	Araseli	Sp. Ed. Para	CMS	3/2/2026	From 33.75 hrs/wk to 16.9 hrs/wk	
Gomez	Searra	Bus Aide/Sub Van Driver	Transportation	2/17/2026	Sub Bus Aide/Sub Van Driver @ Transportation	

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

- Approve the payment of the Knudsen & Monroe invoice as presented.
- Approve a revision to the Bus Transportation Request form as presented.
- Approve membership in the KASB Legal Assistance Fund at a cost of \$3,100.00 for the 2026-27 fiscal year.

## 5. Old Business

### Use of Walton Facility Proposal

Harvey County Administrator, Kevin Frymire, discussed a possible proposal for leasing the Walton facility to use during an upcoming remodel of the courthouse. The county is looking at options for relocating court services during this time. District administration and board members support this idea and the board gave consensus to move forward on working out the details if the county decides the Walton facility will fit their needs.

### Food Service Discussion

Information was given to the board at the February 23 meeting on contracting food service rather than the district hiring a food service director. Staff have visited two districts that utilize different contract services. After discussion, the board gave

consensus for administration to move forward with the RFP process for using a contracted food service company.

### **District Goal Area 2 Review**

This discussion was tabled until the March 23, 2026 board meeting.

### **6. New Business**

The board voted to:

— Approve early graduation requests for Opportunity Academy as presented.

### **Head Start Grant Renewal**

The Head Start grant renewal application and supporting documents were provided to the board for review. Administration will be seeking approval at the March 23 board meeting.

### **Newton High School Out-of-State Contests**

Newton High School provided information on an out-of-state contest this year for the high school RaileRobotics team.

Mallory Morton arrived to the meeting at 7:49 p.m.

### **7. Reports**

#### **BOE Committee Reports**

Mallory recently attended a Head Start meeting. Cooper is accepting applications for Head Start. Ian reported that the March 9 PBC meeting was cancelled and will be rescheduled.

#### **Building and Department Reports**

Building reports for Cooper Early Education, Northridge Elementary, South Breeze Elementary, Sunset Elementary and department reports from Instructional Services and Maintenance/Facilities were provided to the board for information.

### **8. Closing of Meeting**

#### **Board Comments**

Comments included:

- Board members thanked the community for voting and passing the bond. This shows that the community cares about the education of our students and will set a positive tone moving forward.
- The NHS musical, Grease, was well done and entertaining.
- Ian attended a KASB event in Perry Lecompton and local high school students made metal sunflower lawn decorations to give to those in attendance. Ian presented the art to USD 373.
- Superintendent Van Ranken gave a special thanks to Carly Stavola and her work on getting information out to the community regarding the bond. There will be more information in upcoming meetings regarding next steps in the bond.

### **Adjournment**

Move to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

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