

Board Notes — March 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, March 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, Heidi Hoskinson arrived at 7:01 p.m.
Melissa Schreiber arrived at 7:27 p.m.

Members Absent: 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

Ian Long called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Ian Long led the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Long added an Executive Session for Personnel to the agenda following Public Comments.

— Move to adopt the agenda as amended.

2. Presentations/Reports

Student Recognitions

The board recognized the following students who were state qualifiers/medalists: NHS Girls and Boys Wrestling Teams, NHS 2-Speaker Debate, NHS Bowling, Tri-County Railer Basketball League Champs, Science Olympiad students, and NHS Scholars' Bowl members.

Melissa Schreiber arrived to the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Chisholm Middle School

Brittany Burch and several students gave an update on how the yearbook class is going this year. It is a new elective for students.

Cindy Penner and a couple of students talked about the Foreign Language Exploration class, also a new elective this year.

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 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 8:00 p.m. Fred Van Ranken is invited to join the executive session.

5. Consent Agenda

The board voted to:

- Approve the March 9, 2026 minutes as presented.
- Approve the bills as presented.
- Approve the March 23, 2026 Personnel Report as presented.

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Hire	Resignation/Termination
Weber	Tammy	SPED OT Assistant	Cooper	5/21/2026		x
Schrag	Michelle	Sp. Ed. IDD Teacher	CMS	5/22/2026		x
Brown	Molly	Sp. Ed. Para	Cooper	3/12/2026		x
Nichols	Jane	Director of Business/HR	District Office	4/23/2026		x
Arnold	Connie	2nd Gr. Teacher	SC	5/22/2026		x
Lambert	Karyn	Sp. Ed. Para	SB	4/2/2026		x
Hernandez Medina	Samuel	5th Gr. ELA Teacher	SF	8/3/2026	x	
Atwill	Hailey	3rd Gr. Teacher	SS	8/3/2026	x	
Seeney	Miranda	6th Gr. ELA Teacher	SF	8/3/2026	x	
Miller	Alta	Sp. Ed. IR Teacher	CMS	8/1/2026	x	
Wahl	Nicolas	Substitute Teacher	District-Wide	3/13/2026	x	
Hanchett	Chloe	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	3/12/2026	x	
Church	Joshua	1st Shift Floater Custodian	Service Center	3/12/2026	x	
Casey	Tina	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	3/10/2026	x	

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Change of Assignment/Transfer
Gronau	Jennifer	Reg Ed Aide/Sub Bus Aide	NR/Transportation	3/23/2026	Reg. Ed. Aide/Van Driver
August	Cedric	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	3/23/2026	Sp. Ed. Para @ NR
Okpe	Bernard	2nd Shift Custodian	SF	3/16/2026	2nd Shift Custodian @ SC
Guzman	Adolfo	2nd Shift Custodian	SC	3/16/2026	2nd Shift Custodian @ SF

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

- Approve the JAG programs at Newton High School and Chisholm Middle School for 2026-27 as presented.

6. Old Business

Bond Update – CMAR Determination

Representatives from Schaefer were present to discuss the CMAR process and requirements needed to initiate this. After discussion, the board consented to moving forward with the intention to retain a CMAR. The Public Notice provided in the agenda will be sent to the Newton Kansan for publication.

Approve Head Start Grant Renewal

- Approve the Head Start continuation grant for the 2026-27 school year.

Goal Area 2 Review

Superintendent Van Ranken shared information on the work the district has been doing in relation to Goal Area 2: Improve and/or Sustain Culture.

7. New Business

The board voted to:

- Approve the NHS hardship diploma requests as presented.

Approve Resolution to Authorize Sale of Bonds

Bret Shogren with Stifel Public Finance presented information regarding bond funding and answered questions from the board members. Mr. Shogren asked for guidance from the board on moving forward with the contingency process and the board gave consensus on this.

- Approve Resolution No. 03-23-26 authorizing the offering for sale of general obligation refunding and school building bonds of Unified School District No. 373, Harvey County, Kansas (Newton).

MOU - NRC, City of Newton, and the PBC

The district, NRC, City of Newton, and PBC partner to maintain and improve several athletic and park facilities in the community. The Recreation Commission is proposing an increase in what the district and city pay which is outlined in the MOU attached in the board agenda. Administration supports this adjustment and will be seeking approval at the April 13 board meeting.

7. Reports

BOE Committee Reports

No reports.

Building Reports

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

8. Closing of Meeting

Board Comments

Comments included:

- Board members enjoyed the student recognitions and thanked the students and parents for attending.
- Gave recognition to teachers that work hard to help our students be successful.
- Called attention to four high school girls who worked hard at getting information out to other students who were 18 and able to register and vote in the bond election.
- Encouraged attendance in the upcoming Poverty Simulation.
- Superintendent Van Ranken encouraged board members to keep updated on what is happening in Topeka in regards to education related bills.

Adjournment

Move to adjourn at 9:17 p.m.

Background information on agenda items may be found in BoardDocs at:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/ks/usd373/Board.nsf/Public>