

Board Notes — April 13, 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, April 13, 2026, in the Board of Education meeting room located at 308 E 1st, Newton, KS.

Members Present: Bob Diepenbrock, Heidi Hoskinson, Ian Long, Rachel McDaniel, Mallory Morton, Melissa Schreiber, Ericia Stevens

Others Present: Superintendent Fred Van Ranken, Assistant Superintendent Joe Sample, Director of Business Matt Morford, 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.

— Move to adopt the agenda as presented.

2. Presentations/Reports

Student Recognitions

The board recognized the Chisholm Middle School girls wrestling team for an outstanding season and their 1st place league championship.

USD 373 Employee Service Awards

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

- Pete Anderson: NHS Athletic Coach, 5 years
- Agnes Bernard Okpe: CMS Custodian, 5 years
- Ana Chavez: NHS Food Service, 5 years
- Edgar Campbell: District Wide Substitute, 15 years
- Lacreteria Fitzjarrald: SS Substitute, 15 years

3. Comments from the Public

Public Comment - CMAR

No comments.

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 7:20 p.m.

5. Consent Agenda

The board voted to:

- Approve the March 23 & 27, 2026 minutes as presented.
- Approve the bills as presented.
- Approve the Report of Funds as presented.

— Approve the April 13, 2026 Personnel Report as presented.

Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Hire	Resignation/ Termination
Burch	Cheryl	Bus/Van Driver	Transportation	6/1/2026		x
Padilla-Marchany	Peter	Bus Aide	Transportation	4/6/2026		x
Solomon	Michelle	Bus Aide	Transportation	8/1/2026		x
Solomon	Joseph	Bus Driver	Transportation	7/1/2026		x
Starwalt	Joseph	Sp. Ed. Para	NHS	3/25/2026		x
Herrin	Mackala	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	3/30/2026		x
Mowrey	Jennifer	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	5/21/2026		x
Brown	Ashtyn	2nd Gr. Teacher/Coach	SB	5/22/2026		x
McFall	Denise	Asst. Principal	Cooper	6/11/2026		x
Vanderhoof	Alyssa	Principal	Cooper	6/11/2026		x
Schrick	Ann	Sp. Ed. ED Teacher	NHS	5/22/2026		x
Jost	Emily	English Teacher	NHS	5/22/2026		x
Knepper	Brittane	Math Teacher/Coach	NHS	5/22/2026		x
Shear	Lisa	English Teacher	NHS	5/22/2026		x
Lyles	Olivia	Athletic Worker	NHS	4/10/2026		x
Harper	Alicia	Assistant Track Coach	CMS	3/31/2026		x
Orndoff	Linda	Sp. Ed. Para	SS	5/21/2026		x
Schepmann	Lindsay	Sp. Ed. Para	SB	4/9/2026		x
Curtis	Pamela	Sp. Ed. Para	CMS	4/10/2026		x
Johnson	Penney	Reg. Ed. Aide	NHS	6/1/2026		x
Keltz	Shelly	Reg. Ed. Aide	Cooper	4/9/2026	x	
Jeffreys	Erin	Business Teacher	NHS	8/3/2026	x	
Curtis	Pamela	Sp. Ed. Para	CMS	3/30/2026	x	
Last Name	First Name	Position	Location	Effective Date	Change of Assignment/Transfer	
Charrier-Willis	Renee	Media Specialist	NR/SS	5/22/2026	Sp. Ed. Para @ NR	
Fitzjarrald	Lecretia	Permanent Bldg Sub	SS	5/22/2026	District-Wide Substitute	
Bair	Chelsea	Sp. Ed. Para	SF	4/2/2026	From 4 hrs/day to 5.5 hrs/day	
Dibbens	Jamie	PE Teacher/Coach	CMS	5/22/2026	Resign Asst MS Girls BB Coach Only	
Rempel	Caleb	6th Gr Math Tchr/Coach	SF	4/1/2026	Add Asst. Track Coach @ CMS	
Hultman	Adrienne	SPEd Admin Assistant	DO	4/20/2026	Administrative Assistant @ ETC	
Abramowich	Nicholaus	Maintenance	Service Center	4/13/2026	Groundskeeper @ Service Center	

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

— Approve the SRO Invoice for the March-May 2026 quarter as presented.

— Appoint Matt Morford as Deputy Clerk of the Board for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year.

— Approve revisions to Resolutions 2026-07-2, 2026-07-4, 2026-0709 and 2026-07-10 as presented.

- Approve Matt Morford as an alternate signatory for official Head Start paperwork.
- Approve Matt Morford as the representative for Secondary Program Improvement.
- Approve the Prairie View MHIT/Mental Health MOU as presented.
- Approve the renewal of Frontline Education as presented.

6. Old Business

The board voted to:

- Approve the MOU with the NRC, City of Newton, PBC, and USD 373 as presented.

7. New Business

The board voted to:

- Approve the gift requests as presented.

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
South Central Kansas Library System	Newton High School Media Center	Grant received to update book collections	\$1,000.00

Gifts Under \$500: For Information Only

Donation From	To Building/Dept	Description	Value/Amt
First Presbyterian Church	South Breeze Elementary	School supplies	\$300.00
Millennium Machine and Tool	Newton High School Machining Program	Travel expenses for Skills National Competition	\$250.00

- Approve the 2026-27 Transportation Handbook as presented.
- Approve contract extensions for the building administrators and directors through the 2026-2027 school year as presented.

Newton High School:

- Chad Nulik, Principal
- Brian Becker, Athletic Director (district-wide)
- Taylor Counts, Assistant Athletic Director
- Emily Snyder, Assistant Principal
- Scott Stuhlsatz, Assistant Principal
- Julie Tucker, Assistant Principal
- Diane Moser, CTE Director

Opportunity Academy:

- Tyler Swalley, Principal

Chisholm Middle School:

- Tiffany Stephey, Principal
- Petrina Griffiths, Assistant Principal

Santa Fe 5/6 Center:

- Brandon Simmelink, Principal
- Belinda Preston, Assistant Principal

Elementary Schools:

- Tenae Alfaro, Slate Creek Elementary, Principal
- Kate Bremerman, Northridge Elementary, Principal
- Michael Kirkpatrick, Sunset Elementary, Principal
- Joey Menninga, South Breeze Elementary, Principal

- 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 7:35 p.m. Fred Van Ranken is invited to join the session.

- Approve contract extensions for the district office licensed and classified administration through the 2026-2027 school year as presented.

Licensed Administration:

- Joe Sample, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services
- Reagan Seidl, Director of Special Education
- Amber Warsnak, Assistant Director of Special Education

- Brenda Lampman Thompson, Director of Technology
- Classified Administration:
- Sheila Zwahlen, Director of Transportation
 - Jason Smith, Director of Facilities
 - Carly Stavola, Director of Communications

— Approve early graduation requests for Opportunity Academy as presented.

BOE Appointment to the NRC Board

The USD 373 Board of Education appoints two representatives to serve on the Newton Recreation Commission Board each serving a 4-year term with a limit of 2 terms. Brad Cook was appointed by the board on 5/23/22 to serve his first term July 2022-July 2026. Per Brian Bascue, NRC Superintendent, Brad has expressed an interest to continue serving on the board. Administration will be seeking action at the April 27 board meeting.

Open Enrollment Slots and Projected Enrollment

Superintendent Van Ranken provided current and projected enrollment numbers as well as recommended slots available for nonresident students. The board will be asked to approve the slots and associated enrollment projections and limits at the April 27, 2026 BOE meeting.

Next Year Considerations

Matt Morford gave a report on possible dollars available to set aside to address staffing needs and wages.

Joe Sample provided information on RailerRise, a program to address student behavioral issues.

Superintendent Van Ranken gave an update on addressing the HR position and how to fund other needs considering the current fiscal situation. He also addressed staffing needs for 2027-28 and declining enrollment.

After discussion, the board gave their support for moving forward with an HR Director position and the RailerRise program.

8. Reports

BOE Committee Reports

No reports.

Building Reports

Building reports for Cooper Early Education Center, Northridge Elementary, Slate Creek Elementary, South Breeze Elementary, and Sunset Elementary were provided to the board for information.

Department Reports

Reports from Instructional Services, Business Services and Maintenance/Facilities were provided to the board for information.

9. Closing of Meeting

Board Comments

Comments included:

- Spring is a busy time for school activities and sports. Reminder of a concert on May 30 to support the fine arts program.
- Welcomed Matt Morford to the district.

- Congratulations to Mrs. Ives and prom committee and to the National Honor Society members.
- Interest in having a work session to discuss the role of the board and role of individual board members.
- Appreciated information provided by admins on the projected enrollment and considerations for next year.
- The last legislative informative session will be Saturday, April 18 at McKinley, 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Move to adjourn at 8:57 p.m.

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