



USD 497 News Release

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Board Approves English Language Arts Curriculum and Student Transportation Services

English Language Arts Adoption and Purchase

Dr. Cole Amaya, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, presented a recommendation for purchase of Amplify CKLA (grades K-5) and Amplify ELA (grades 6-8). These high-quality instructional materials will provide a vertically aligned, and research-based literacy system to build a strong foundation in decoding, fluency, vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension through systematic and explicit instruction.

The structured literacy adoption represents a cohesive approach across grade levels, strengthens instructional practices, and supports improved literacy outcomes for all students. Official field testing of both selected resources occurred over the spring, and teacher and principal feedback was solicited and in support of the recommendation.

The Board of Education approved (5-0 vote) the purchase of Amplify CKLA and Amplify ELA for a total amount of \$1,162,698.00 to be paid from the teaching and learning curriculum adoption fund. The six-year contract includes teacher access through 2031-32, and includes a four-year consumable purchase for school years 26-27, 27-28, 28-29, and 29-30. The board also approved (5-0 vote) a one-time purchase of Amplify CKLA (K-5) and Amplify ELA (6-8) professional learning in the amount of \$140,900 paid from the Title II budget.

Funding of these purchases is designated for curriculum and professional development, and are not eligible to be used for staff wages.

[Click here for presentation slides containing additional information.](#)

Superintendent's Report

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

- Last week, Lawrence Public Schools' [annual District Arts Show](#) kicked off on Friday evening, with student artwork that will remain on display at the **Lawrence Arts Center** through May 9.
- Recognized **Amanda Carlson from Cordley Elementary** for being recognized at the 2027 Kansas [Region 2 Teacher of the Year banquet](#) held in Topeka.
- **Lawrence Schools Foundation** received the [2026 Jayhawk Performance Legacy](#)

[Member Award](#) from the University of Kansas Department of Health, Sport, and Exercise Sciences.

- **Lawrence High School's Mike Jones** received the **Lied Center's IMPACT Award** in recognition of educators who demonstrate leadership in the field, artistic integrity, a deep commitment to arts education, and innovation in their work with students.
- [Kindergarten Orientation was held on Wednesday, April 22](#). Families of incoming kindergarten students visited schools to meet staff, learn about daily routines and curricula, and receive tips in preparing for a successful transition into Kindergarten in August.
- **Lawrence High School** hosted their annual [Career and Technical Education Expo](#) event, highlighting student learning across CTE pathways, from engineering and health sciences to the arts and culinary programs.

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

Student Transportation Update

Dr. Larry Englebrick, deputy superintendent, and Cynde Frick, CFO, shared an update on student transportation and a summary of the process for evaluation of proposals to provide transportation services for the 26-27 school year.

The district is concluding the last year of a 5-year contract with First Student. A recommendation was made for a 3-year contract with Durham School Services, with two optional one-year renewals. Stated factors for the recommended partnership with Durham included: student and staff safety as a top priority; demonstrated performance in customer satisfaction; focus on service to students and parents; and commitment to refinements and identifying efficiencies and cost savings.

Transportation enhancements to be delivered include a bus driver wage increase of \$1.50/per hour; signing bonuses of \$2,000/per employee; and reduced lease costs by using the district's Facilities and Operations lot as the vehicle bus barn location.

The estimated annual cost for the recommendation is \$6.8 million for 26-27 with 4% annual increase in subsequent years. Funding will come from the General Fund and Special Education Fund. Funding will also come from the FY 2026 Capital Outlay (bus lease) funds. The bus lease capital outlay funds cannot be used for classroom salaries. The board approved with a vote of 5-0.

[Click here for presentation slides containing additional information.](#)

Consent Agenda

The board approved a consent agenda including approvals for Woodlawn Elementary Solar Energy System – Photovoltaic (not to exceed \$94,542.25 from capital outlay funds); personnel report; monthly vouchers; and meeting minutes (April 13).

Consent agenda was approved 5-0.

Board Reports

Board President Gordon-Ross highlighted the patience and goodwill displayed by students, families,

and staff during last Thursday's Lawrence High School ShowTime despite two tornado warnings when attendees were guided to designated emergency shelters within the building.

Members Lancaster & Jones both noted progress made during Negotiations committee meetings.

Executive Session

The board met in executive session to discuss negotiations with no action taken.

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

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