



**Board of Education
Superintendent Report
Monday, June 8, 2026**

Hello Members of the Board and Lawrence Public Schools Community,

Today is June 8th, and we are laser focused on having our teams in place and schools well-prepared for the launch of school year 2026-27. Dr. Amaya and Kristen Ryan, alongside our District Leadership Team will engage with school leaders across three days this week on exciting instructional, student supports, and systems planning and preparation work.

Looking ahead, school leaders, new teachers and students will arrive back to begin a new year at starting milestones between 6 and 9 weeks from now. These prior days and weeks have been packed with interviews and the many details of robust hiring processes. It's an exciting time, and we are proud to bring key and critical hires forward for Board consideration this evening.

I am delighted to share the following early June highlights from across Lawrence Public Schools:

Welcome Algerian National Team

This summer, Lawrence has the unique opportunity to welcome the **Algerian National Team** as they make our community their home away from home during the **FIFA World Cup**. **Lawrence High School students** recently partnered with **Explore Lawrence** to create a special welcome message for [Team Algeria](#). I would like to share a short clip: [LHS Welcomes Team Algeria](#)

Congratulations to Adult Education Graduates

Since we last convened, the Lawrence Public Schools celebrated the accomplishments of the [Adult Education Class of 2026](#) during the district's final commencement ceremony of the 2025-26 school year. A total of 54 graduates were recognized, including 25 students who earned high school diplomas through the Lawrence Diploma Completion Program and 29 students who completed a GED through the Lawrence Adult Education Center.

The ceremony highlights the determination, resilience, and perseverance demonstrated by graduates as they balanced education with work, family, and other responsibilities. Graduates were joined by a large crowd of family and friends, staff, district leaders, and Board of Education members in celebrating such an important life milestone.

Additional Details

Lawrence High School Diploma Completion Program Graduates: 12

Free State High School Diploma Completion Program Graduates: 13

Lawrence Adult Education Center GED Graduates: 29

Total Graduates Recognized: 54

Ashley Vance Award Spring 2026 Class Act Award Recipient

We are proud to recognize **Ashley Vance, Office Manager for the Deputy Superintendent**, as [the Spring 2026 recipient of the district's Class Act Award](#).

Ashley's commitment to service, professionalism, and collaboration has positively impacted departments and schools across the district. Her ability to coordinate complex projects, support staff, and foster positive working relationships helps ensure district operations run smoothly and efficiently.

The Class Act Award recognizes classified staff members who exemplify leadership, teamwork, accountability, positivity, and a strong commitment to supporting colleagues and students. Through the district's LEAP partnership, award recipients also receive a \$500 prize sponsored by Truity Credit Union.

2026 Summer Novice Music Camp

160 students - 5th and 6th graders - recently participated in Lawrence Public Schools

[2026 Summer Novice Music Camp at Lawrence High School](#).

The camp serves as an important introduction to instrumental music for many students, and provides an opportunity to explore brass, woodwind, percussion, and string instruments while learning foundational skills from music educators; here is a brief video highlighting our musicians.

6A Spring Sports Post Season

Recently, multiple teams and individual athletes qualified for state events, earning medals, top finishes, and statewide recognition for their accomplishments.

Baseball: **Free State High School** has continued its tradition as an outstanding baseball program, reaching the state tournament for the tenth time in the last eleven seasons. [The Firebirds entered state with a 25-4 record and finished as state runner-up after a 4-3 loss to Washburn Rural in the title game](#). The season also marked the final year for longtime head coach Mike Hill, who announced his retirement after leading the program since the school's opening in 1997.

Track and Field: Lawrence Public Schools was well represented at the 2026 KSHSAA State Track and Field Championships, with athletes from both **Lawrence High** and **Free State High** competing against the state's top performers.

Among the highlights, Free State's girls team tied for fifth place at the 6A State Track & Field Championships and was led by **Sadie Reynolds** who earned a state championship in the girls discus with a throw of 145 feet.

Final Results:

Boys 4x100m Relay: LHS 16th place.

Boys 4x400m Relay: LHS 7th place.

Boys 4x800m Relay: FSHS 7th place.

Boys 400m: Truth Pope (LHS) 11th; Harrison Leiszler (FSHS) 13th place.

Boys 800m: Jasper Hansen Terry (FSHS) 8th place.

Boys Long Jump: Toby Kwan (FSHS) 5th place.

Boys Triple Jump: Joseph Lucas (LHS) 16th place.

Boys Pole Vault: Aaden Chee (LHS) 13th place.

Boys Shot Put: Devin Foster (LHS) 6th place & Joey Dooley (LHS) 9th place; James Kahungura (FSHS) 11th place.

Boys Javelin: Tyler Dye (LHS) 3rd place; Hudson Andrew (FSHS) 12th place.

Girls 4x100m Relay: FSHS 16th place.

Girls 4x400m Relay: FSHS 5th place.

Girls 4x800m Relay: FSHS 8th place.

Girls 100m Hurdles: Shana Teenor (FSHS) 16th place.

Girls 300m Hurdles: Peyton Moore (FSHS) 10th place; Harper Graham (FSHS) 17th place.

Girls 200m: LaKeyshia Woods (LHS) 16th place.

Girls 400m: Beatrice Essman (FSHS) 2nd place; Aiyanna Moss (FSHS) 5th place; LaKeyshia Woods (LHS) 10th place.

Girls 1600m: Grace Toner (FSHS) 7th place; Taylor Hulcher (FSHS) 8th place; Andie Garrett (LHS) 9th place.

Girls 800m: Grace Toner (FSHS) 3rd place; Andie Garrett (LHS) 13th place; Taylor Hulcher (16th place).

Girls High Jump: Hadley Ornes (LHS) 15th place.

Girls Long Jump: Parker Jones (FSHS) 2nd place; Layla Simmons (LHS) 4th place.

Girls Triple Jump: Chloe Voss (FSHS) 14th place.

Girls Discus: Sadie Reynolds (FSHS) 1st place.

Boys Golf: [Free State golfers Henry Thompson and A.J. Kimzey earned top-20 finishes](#) at the KSHSAA Class 6A State Golf Tournament at Firekeeper Golf Course in Mayetta.

Thompson finished 17th with a two-day score of 150, while Kimzey placed 20th. Thompson concluded an outstanding high school career and will continue his academic and athletic career at Washburn University.

Final Results: Henry Thompson (FSHS) 17th; AJ Kimzey (FSHS) 20th; Jackson Lind and Corbin May-Bryant (LHS) 56th tied; Andrew Kirkwood (LHS) 68th; Cash Nelson (FSHS) 74th; Raleigh Jeter (FSHS) 82nd; Brady Johnson (FSHS) 87th; and Bob Leatherman (FSHS) 91st.

Lawrence PRIDE Parade

We were proud to be represented by board of education members who participated in the annual **Lawrence PRIDE parade**, held on Mass Street last Saturday. This event takes place the first Saturday in June, and is aligned with the celebration of PRIDE Month. The parade and celebration created a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all, and served as a wonderful reminder of the beautiful diversity we are so proud of across our Lawrence community.

Summer Improvement Projects Underway

Students learn best in well-maintained, safe and welcoming environments, and we take the responsibility to caretake very seriously. Our district teams are on a full court press to use these summer weeks to accomplish improvements, maintain facilities, and prepare for the start of the 2026-27 school year.

Improvement projects include:

- New preschool classrooms at **Deerfield** and **Prairie Park**
- Reconstruction of the **Free State** press box
- Track resurfacing projects at both comprehensive high schools
- Middle school theater upgrades at all middle schools
- Solar installation at **Woodlawn**
- The continued development of the district's **Family Engagement Center** located at the Educational Support Center.

And students returning in August will also enjoy new playgrounds installed at **Deerfield** and **Prairie Park Elementary Schools**.

Additional Details:

Other project improvements coming this summer

Site Improvements & Infrastructure

- Asphalt and concrete replacement and repairs: Pinckney, Prairie Park, Quail Run, Southwest Middle School, Billy Mills Middle School, and Centennial; additional repairs at Kennedy Early Childhood Center, Lawrence High School, and Sunflower Elementary
- Roofing projects: Centennial, Billy Mills Middle School skylights, and West Middle School
- HVAC improvements: Southwest Middle School and Sunflower Elementary
- Chiller installation: Lawrence High School
- Generator replacement: Educational Support Center

Learning Spaces

- Montessori classroom enhancements
- Classroom and hallway painting projects:
 - Deerfield Elementary
 - Hillcrest Elementary
 - Woodlawn Elementary
 - Sunflower Elementary

Athletics & Activities

- Middle school theater upgrades:
 - Billy Mills Middle School
 - Lawrence Middle School
 - Southwest Middle School
 - West Middle School
- Stadium and athletic field lighting upgrades:
 - Lawrence High School stadium and softball field
 - Free State High School stadium
- Free State High School press box reconstruction

District Facilities

- Conference Room upgrades: Educational Support Center

ParentSquare – Year in Review

The board will have an opportunity a little later in the meeting to consider renewal of the subscription to ParentSquare, as our primary school-to-home communication platform in Lawrence Public Schools.

As you may recall, this enhancement was a direct response to families that provided critical feedback to the district about how challenging and frustrating it was to stay informed while tracking multiple applications and platforms being used by our classrooms, teams, clubs, and schools.

ParentSquare consolidates all district and school-level communications including urgent alerts, attendance notifications, newsletters, two-way messaging, and online forms into a single platform accessible by families via mobile app, text message, email, or web.

A robust [implementation of ParentSquare](#) beginning last July - has the district in a strong position for compliance with recent legislative action by the State regarding educator and school district communications with families and students. A shout out to James Polk, Jake Potter and the members of the IT and communications team who executed and shepherded this important implementation through this past year.

We are proud to report that **99.2% of LPS families** are contactable through the platform, and our team continues work to increase that percentage during the 2026-27 student enrollment window.

Further, approximately 3.5% of families have adjusted their user settings to receive district communications in their home language, spanning 12 languages: Arabic, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Burmese, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, Turkish, and Vietnamese. with Spanish being the most common.

ParentSquare Home Language count (per student):

Arabic = 14

Chinese = 29

Filipino (Tagalog) = 1

Japanese = 4

Korean = 6

Lao = 10

Myanmar (Burmese) = 10

Portuguese = 14

Spanish = 602

Swahili = 20

Turkish = 2

Vietnamese = 29

SPED Updated Costs (24-25 school year)

Throughout the last several legislative sessions, the topic of the state's obligation to fund special education services at a constitutional obligated level has been a subject of frequent discussion.

For consideration locally, Lawrence Public School's special education facts are as follows for the

24-25 school year (per June 2025 audit):

- Percent of students qualifying for special education services: **20.7%**.
- Special education staff: 442 total (220 certified educators; and 222 classified support paraeducators)
- Total number of special education categories: 15, which includes 14 disability categories identified per IDEA, in addition to gifted education.
Note that a student may qualify in more than one category.
- Specialized programs: 28 total (10 elementary; 10 middle; and 8 high school).
- Special education costs/expenditures: \$33.5 million.
- Special education revenues/reimbursements from federal, state, and local special education funding: \$19.8 million.
- **Meeting the gap required a transfer from the general fund/local option fund for unreimbursed special education expenditures and interest of \$13.7 million. It is anticipated that numbers for the just completed 25-26 school year will be similar to last year.**

Numbers provided by Cynde Frick, Executive Director of Finance and Lori Stithem, Executive Director of Special Education from 24/25 School Year, as the current year's numbers are not yet finalized/audited. Source is June 30, 2025 Financial Audit.

Reminder: Free Summer Meals for Kids Available Now

As a reminder, Lawrence Public Schools is once again providing [free summer meal opportunities](#) for children fully funded through [the USDA's Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#).

During the first week of meal service, district staff and community partners served approximately 12,000 meals. The meal kit distribution site at the Douglas County Fairgrounds accounted for more than 9,000 meals.

[Registration for weekly meal kits remains open throughout the summer.](#)

Beginning this week, families visiting the **Sunset Hill Elementary** meal site on Tuesdays will also have the opportunity to participate in a weekly summer arts series hosted by a local arts organization during lunch service.

Additional Details

Public meal site: Sunset Hill Elementary

June 1-July 24, Monday-Friday, 12:00-12:45 p.m.

No meals served June 19 or July 3

Adult meals available on-site for \$5

Weekly meal kit pickup: Tuesdays, 7:00-9:00 a.m.

Pickup location: Douglas County Fairgrounds Open Pavilion

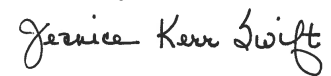
Registration is required for meal kits

All meals for children are provided at no cost through the USDA Summer Food Service Program

We are excited for these summer weeks and staying the course with the diligent work necessary to be ready for a new school year.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this Superintendent Report, and for the honor of serving the Lawrence Public Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanice Kerr Swift".

Jeanice Kerr Swift
Superintendent of Schools
Lawrence Public Schools