

2025-2026 Cottonwood Building Needs Assessment for 2026-2027 Budget Considerations

Due Date: 12/19/2025

Board Presentation: 1/27/2026



School Improvement - Fundamentals

The four fundamentals are interconnected and associated with actions that each school system must implement so students can meet our state's rigorous standards.

Structured Literacy	Standards Alignment	Balanced Assessment	Quality Instruction
We apply an explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and cumulative approach to teaching literacy that acknowledges the value of both word recognition and oral/written language comprehension as evidenced in all grades and disciplines. ● Phonemic Awareness ● Phonics ● Fluency ● Vocabulary ● Comprehension	We align lessons, instruction, and materials to Kansas standards and clearly identify what students must know and be able to do. This includes interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive skills in preK-12. ● Learning Intentions ● Success Criteria ● Academic Rigor ● Scope & Sequence	We assess students for risk and standards in preK-12 and use data to adjust instruction. We have a deep understanding of the purpose of each assessment and how to use the data to raise achievement. ● Formatives ● Summatives ● Progress Monitoring ● Screening ● Diagnostic	We have a culture of high expectations in our classrooms and provide each student access to grade-level standards and content through high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) in preK-12. ● High Expectations ● Culturally Responsive ● Differentiation ● Academic & SEL ● Student Dispositions

Structures: Reinforce lead indicators and sustain fundamentals within the system: resource allocation; education evaluations; professional learning; professional collaboration; tiered system of supports; and family, community and business partnerships.

For each data review section include data that is important for your building. Highlights areas of success and growth as well as data that indicates areas of concern or need. You can use narrative statements and/or quantitative representations depending on data type.

- **Current State:** identify data trends, highlight successes, and concerns. Include references to achievement gaps for subgroups where applicable.
- **Desired State:** include goals and/or actions to address aggregate and subgroups when applicable.

Communication Goals – Data Review:

	Current State:	Desired State:
KSA ELA	Assessment performance: 32.62% at level 1. 43.3% are at level 3 or 4. We continued our ELA curriculum, HMH Into Reading. Our teachers taught the program with fidelity and used the data from the module assessments to drive their instruction. Teachers were also given 30 additional minutes to work on the fluency skills through tiered intervention. State Assessment Comparison 2024-2025 Building - Decrease Level 1 by 6.8 percent - Increase level 3 & 4 by 5.81% Students with Disabilities -Increase in level 1 students by 9 percent. Increase level 3 and 4 by 7 percent Free and Reduced - 2 percent increase in level 1 from the whole group. 1 percent drop in level 3 and 4.	5% decrease in the number of students performing at level 1 on the KS ELA assessment by 2027. 5% increase in the number of students performing at a level 3 or 4 on the KS ELA assessment by 2027. Stop the trend of an increase in students with disabilities who are performing at level 1.
Complex Communication Rubric	52% of our students are performing at the demonstrating level, this is an increase from 23% from the previous year.	56% of our students will be at the demonstrating level at the end of the 25-26 school year.
Other Data	i-Ready Tasks Reading Fluency Data 2024-2025 Grade 2: 56% of students on or above level. Grade 3: 58% of students on or above level. Grade 4: 70% of students on or above level. Grade 5: 43% of students on or above level.	i-Ready Task Passage Reading Fluency Goals 2025-2026: Grade 2: Goal – 62% of students on or above level. Grade 3: Goal – 60% of students on or above level. Grade 4: Goal – 65% of students on or above level. Grade 5: Goal – 72% of students on or above level.

Critical Thinking Goals – Data Review:

	Current State:	Desired State:
KSA Math	Assessment performance: 27.65% at level 1. 40.42% are at level 3 or 4. This was year 1 of the new curriculum, Eureka Squared. Our teachers implemented the program and used the data from the module assessments to drive their instruction. Teachers were also given 40 additional minutes to work on the prerequisite skills that they are missing and/or newly taught skills that have not been mastered. Teachers had the autonomy to teach the students the skills they feel are missing using the data to help them decide. State Assessment Comparison 2024-2025 Building - Decrease level 1 by 2.5 percent - Increase in level 3 & 4 by 3.4 percent Students with disabilities- Level 1 decrease by 7.5 % - Increase in level 3 and 4 by 7.72% Free and Reduced - 1 percent increase in level 1 - 13.1 percent increase level 3 and 4.	5% decrease in the number of students performing at level 1 on the KS math assessment by 2027. 7% increase in the number of students performing at a level 3 or 4 on the KS math assessment by 2027. Maintain the gains in Level 3 and 4 in students with disabilities and free and reduced.
KSA Science	Assessment performance: 38% at level 1. 34% are at level 3 or 4. State Assessment Comparison 2023-2024 Building 16.7% decrease in students in level 1. 16 percent decrease in level 3 and 4.	8% decrease in the number of students performing at level 1 on the KS Science assessment by 2027. 6% increase in the number of students performing at a level 3 or 4 on the KS ELA assessment by 2027.
Critical Thinking Rubric	10.6% of our students are performing at the demonstrating level, this is increase from 0% the previous year.	15% of our students will be at the demonstrating level at the end of 25-26 school year.
Other Data		

Behavior and Social-Emotional – Data Review:

	Current State:	Desired State:
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Social Emotional Behavior Offenses	6.0% of our students are performing at the demonstrating level, this is a decrease of 0.3% from the previous year.	5.0% of our students will be at the demonstrating level at the end of the 25-26 school year.
Chronically Absent	14.78% of our students are chronically absent. This is a 2.53% decrease from the previous year	The desired state is 13% of students chronically absent. Our rate continues to decline from intentional parent communication. Staff have also worked to include chronically absent students into the school community to help encourage attendance.
Self-Directed Learning Rubric	6.3% of our students are performing at the demonstrating level, this is an increase from 4.1% from the previous year.	15% of our students will be at the demonstrating level at the end of the 25-26 school year.
Other Data		

State Outcomes – Data Review:

	Current State:	Desired State:
Civic Engagement/ IPS	Science and SS time in the classroom. Monthly Civic Engagement Calendar - One civics project per grade level. Civics Day Activities - 4th Grade Veterans Day Activities Our staff and students have the opportunity to be involved with: ● School Marathon ● Central High School Marathon Night ● Parent Involvement Activities ● Match Madness ● Family Engagement Nights ● Arts Infusion Program ● Field Trips: Salina Community Theatre, Stiefel, Starbase, Pumpkin Patch, Rolling Hills Zoo ● Salina Area Technical College Night with Preschool ● Garden Club ● Mobile Museum from the Kansas Children's Discovery Center for preschool students ● Grades 2-5 Mobile Accessible Sports Event	Cottonwood Elementary will engage citizens by enhancing biweekly Social Studies/Civic instruction. Currently, teachers use resources like Studies Weekly and HMH (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) for whole-group reading instruction. When the opportunity presents itself the connection is made to learning. Collaboratively, our goal is for 100% of students to regularly engage in activities that develop civic knowledge, promote career exploration, and foster a lifelong commitment to positively impacting their community.

Use the chart below to record needs and/or actions for each area that will support your school improvement work and impact student performance. The needs assessment for each school will be reviewed by the Board of Education as part of the annual budget decision process.

KESA Fundamental & SI Structures	Need Areas		
	Academics	Behavior	SEL
Standards Alignment (KESA Focus Fundamental)	3rd, 4th, and 5th grades give KSDE mini tests that align with the state standards. They practice test taking skills, take the test, and/or review data weekly. PLC teams are using the information from the mini test to compare and align with Eureka Math lessons and teachings. Time for staff to collaborate and breakdown provided plans in regards to the Science and Social Studies time (25 min daily)	Strategies in place for Tier 2 and 3 students to build skills to self-regulate and be aware of when they are escalated.	Provide more opportunities for students to interact with Learning Dispositions - HOWL
Professional Learning	More Collaboration time with other grade levels, early release days or building inservice time District professional development (PD) opportunities for support staff	MTSS/Ci3T Trainings These trainings will provide Cottonwood with the ability to create a data driven framework to support all students academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs through a layered system of support.	

	Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for all staff who teach EL Need to continue Visible Learning Professional Development. Cottonwood is working towards an emphasis of student engagement and ownership. The goal is these strategies will yield a high level impact on student achievement.	
Professional Collaboration	Building In-service time/Early Release Days to work with cross-grade level teams to interpret data and begin to develop strategies for tiered support. These times could focus on CI3T Tiers and or PLC for grade levels.	
Tiered System of Support	We currently lack adequate intervention staff to serve all students performing below grade level. This intervention and support are critical for students in Tier II and Tier III, who require more intensive and frequent instruction to address foundational skill deficits. We want to continue to strengthen Tier 1 through LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training and stronger whole group instruction; to have	Our school is in the refining stages of implementing a tiered system of behavior support. Through the use of executive skills data and SRSS-IE (Student Risk Screening Scale) data, we have identified students who would benefit from additional social-emotional and behavioral support beyond Tier 1. This data-driven process has helped us better understand the varying levels of student need and provided a foundation for developing targeted interventions. Time/Collaboration/Planning for teachers to discuss and focus on the understanding of the TIER II component provided within Character Strong. Training on the University of Kansas MTSS Model (Comprehensive, Integrated, Three-Tiered (CI3T)) process for Tiered Support will help us create decision rules and progress monitoring systems to ensure student success.

	fewer kids in need of Tier 2 intervention.	Teachers are implementing Character Strong Tiered Support as the curriculum framework. This program is designed to strengthen students' social-emotional competencies, executive functioning skills, and overall self-regulation.	
Family, Community and Business Partnerships	Cottonwood Elementary benefits from Central Kansas Mental Health. The CAPS program provides Happy Bear for our primary students and bullying prevention for upper grades. Gambino's Pizza supports our reading incentive program and sponsors our school each month. St. John's Baptist church provides students with after-school programs and has many outreach programs for our families. Family University invites parents and the community into the school and share services. Cottonwood's PTA has had a significant increase in parent involvement. The First United Methodist church supports Cottonwood by giving food items, coats, and hats. They also support teachers with supplies for the classroom. Trinity United Methodist church provided 25 of our families with groceries for a month.		
Resource Allocation	Para position openings - these openings create a lack of coverage and the ability to meet students' individualized needs. Math or Reading Interventionist. All grades are not able to be covered with the current staffing levels.	Additional behavior support staff to respond to calls to help co-regulate with students. Social workers and counselors provide support when needed, but their duties take precedence many times which leaves few staff with available time to process/re-regulate and integrate students.	

Rose Capacities:

Educational Capacities (pursuant to K.S.A 72-3218): How are you ensuring every child in your school is provided at least the following capacities?	
1. Sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable	Current state: Teachers monitor and administer Speaking and Listening standards across all grade levels in ELA.

students to function in complex and rapidly changing civilization.	HMH <i>Into Reading</i> incorporates oral communication skills by intentionally embedding structured speaking and listening opportunities throughout daily lessons in grades K–5. Students regularly engage in partner talk, collaborative discussions, and whole-group conversations to explain thinking, ask questions, and build ideas with others. Oral language is developed through routines such as turn-and-talks, text-based discussions, retelling, and sharing written work aloud, which help students practice clear speaking, active listening, and academic vocabulary. Teachers model discussion norms and sentence frames, gradually releasing responsibility so students gain confidence expressing ideas, responding to peers, and presenting information, supporting both comprehension and strong communication skills. Desired state: All students will be proficient and score at Level 3 on Kansas State Reading Assessment.
2. Sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable students to make informed choices.	Current state: Although there are some modules that focus on social studies concepts, these are not found at each grade level. During Social Studies time (every other week), students are exposed to social studies standards. Desired state: Increased curriculum and text resources for teaching, as well as increasing instructional time during the day.
3. Sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state and nation.	Current state: Currently students receive 30 minutes 3X per week of Science and 2X per week of SS. Desired state: Science curriculum that is provided at the beginning of the year. This will allow teachers more time to process and understand the scope of material.
4. Sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness.	Current state: Mindfulness, Zones of Regulation, Character Strong, Cottonwood Plan for Success, Marathon, and 1:1 student or group intervention sessions with the School Counselor or Social Worker. Desired state: Cottonwood will be able to have students take non-academic surveys that could be utilized to target interventions and resources to support students that have lagging social-emotional wellness. Continued support with assistance of Social Worker and Counselor.
5. Sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage.	Current state: Teachers have access to Arts Infusion and some choose to bring in fine arts performers. Students participate in art and music each week. Students also have opportunities at the Stiefel Theatre/ Salina Community Theater/Creede Repertory Theater. Desired state: Increase and foster art opportunities for each classroom.

6. Sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each child to choose and pursue life work intelligently.	Current state: Cottonwood does not have curricula, programs, or services that engage students in a process that leads students to a postsecondary plan. There is no set curriculum or outcome that all students can access. Desired state: Collaboration between secondary teachers and business partners to give students a snapshot of current academic and vocational fields.
7. Sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.	Current state: Cottonwood does not have curricula, programs, or services that engage students in a process that leads students to a postsecondary plan. Desired state: Collaboration between secondary teachers and business partners to give students a snapshot of current academic and vocational fields.

Building Barrier Statement:

What are the barriers that must be overcome to have all students achieve proficiency above level 2 for grade level academic expectations on state assessment?
1. Cottonwood Elementary embraces the challenge of roughly 80% of students falling in the at-risk category and 33% of students qualifying for SPED. 2. Cottonwood more than doubles the state averages of percent of students in these categories. 3. Cottonwood has several students with severe social/emotional/behavioral due to past trauma and mental health concerns. Social-Emotional Development of Students • Student behaviors - o Apathy - o Refusal - o Elopement - o Explosive & physically aggressive behavior - o Disrespect/insubordination • Student anxiety/Mental Health - o Heightened sensitivity to personal safety - o Lack of social awareness due to lack of experiences - o Trauma experiences - o Test anxiety

Academics:

- Learning loss due to the pandemic has only amplified the gap that exists in student learning
 - o Continued absences
 - o Lack of preschool experience with incoming students
 - o Student instruction needs
 - o Class size
- Time spent at home on learning support
 - o Parents can't or won't help
 - o Various levels of family engagement