



Superintendent of Schools Report to the Board

July 13, 2026

Jernice Kerr Swift

Students Perform Across Europe

5 Free State High School band students joined 100 other KS students in the Kansas Ambassadors of Music European Concert Tour.

- Students toured and performed across England, France, Switzerland, Austria, & Germany!



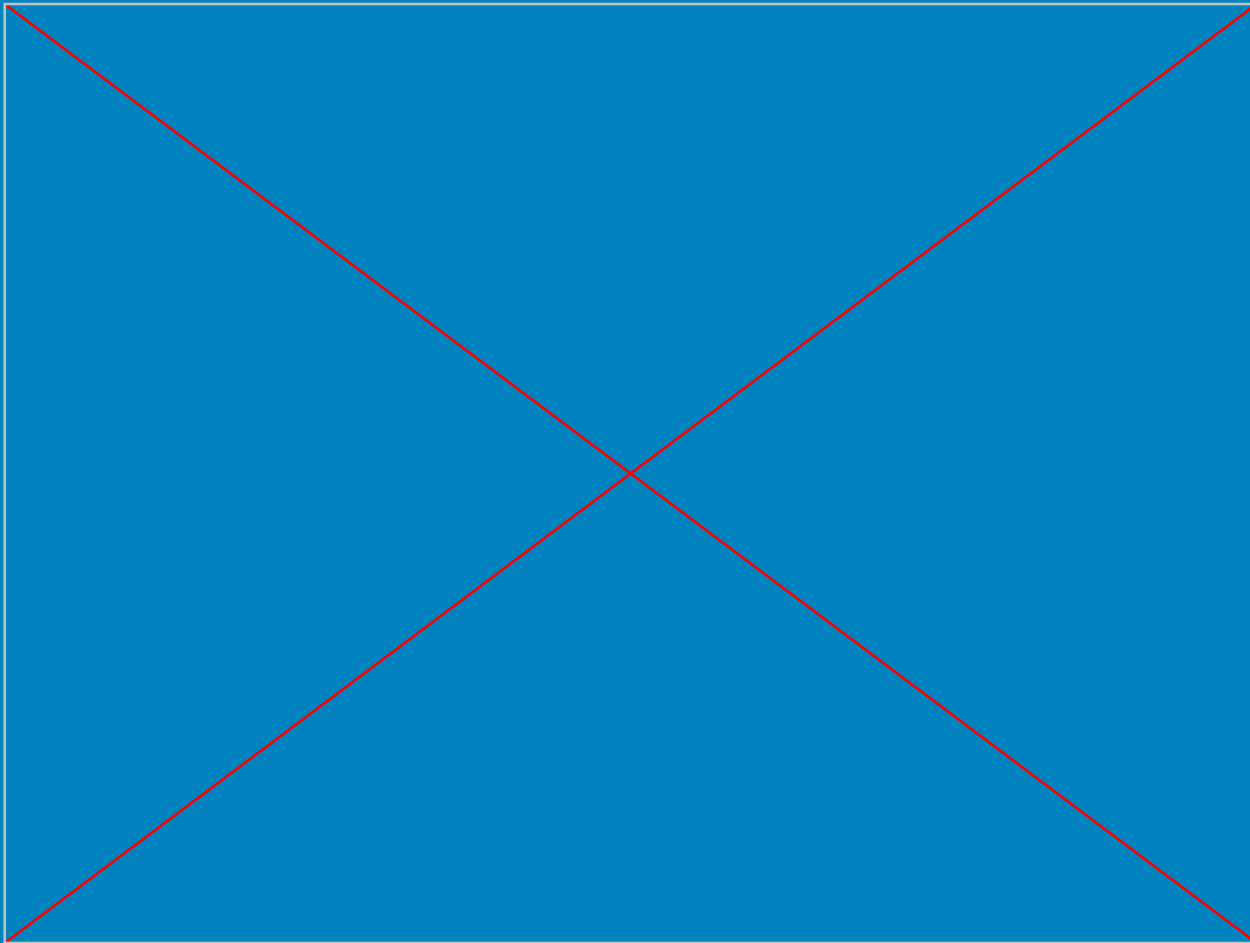
Student & Staff Excellence in Choral Music

At the Kansas Choral Directors Association (KCDA) Summer Convention last week:

- **Free State High School** Choir Director **Joshua East** and **Lawrence High School** Choir Director **Rachel Naughtin** were recognized by the KCDA.
- 29 students from both high schools performed in the convention's 100-voice Honor Choir



All State Honor Choir Performance



Student Earns National History Day Recognition

Student Spotlight

West Middle School student Éabha Klinksick awarded the Equality in History Prize during **2026 National History Day Contest**.

Éabha's original spoken-word performance, *Breaking Ground: Womontown*, explored the founding of Womontown in Kansas City.

- Selected as 1 of 12 student performances showcased at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.



Special Education Highlights

- Strengthened implementation of **Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)** through:
 - Expanded professional learning for staff and principals
 - Increased collaboration with building leaders
 - Enhanced recruitment and retention efforts for special education teams
- **Looking ahead:**
 - sustaining implementation and measuring impact
 - strengthening staffing, instructional quality, and expanding access to general education curriculum for all students.



Extended School Year (ESY) 2026

This summer's program included:

- Served **194 students**, from early childhood through age 21
- Involved **142 special education teachers, paraeducators, and related service providers**
- Achieved an **89.9% average student attendance**
- Services provided at **Community Connections at Pinckney, Prairie Park Elementary, Billy Mills Middle School, Lawrence HS, and Free State HS**



Preparing for 2026–27:

New Educator Orientations Continue

Welcoming new educators this past week:

- 23 new hires
- 5 returning educators
- 7 Educational Support Professional become Certified Educators in Special Education

Welcomed 35 certified educators!



8



LAWRENCE
Public Schools

Annual Student Enrollment

NOW OPEN: July 8 – July 31

Required for all returning students!

→ **www.usd497.org/enroll**

- ***3,000+ returning students (~35%) have already completed Annual Student Enrollment!***

**ANNUAL
STUDENT
ENROLLMENT**
→ **NOW OPEN**

Enroll for the 2026-27 school year at:

www.usd497.org/enroll



Get Ready for Back-to-School 2026-27!



Find everything you need to
get ready for the 2026-27 school year at:

→ www.usd497.org/back-to-school



Countdown to the #FirstDayin497

30 : 14 : 50 : 25

DAYS

HOURS

MINUTES

SECONDS

10

Need Bus Transportation?

For information & instructions about requesting transportation for 2026–27, visit our website:

→ www.usd497.org/transportation



Transportation requests should be submitted by July 24th.

Donation Drive

2026 Douglas County Back2School
Supply Drive runs from July 1 - July 31

- The drive supplements our collective efforts to ensure all students begin the school year with supplies to support learning success.

Bring supplies to
these locations:



Central Bank (all locations)
Chick Fil A
Commerce Bank (Iowa St./Wakarusa locations)
Corpus Christi Church
Dillons at the Crossing
Eileens Colossal Cookies
Envista Credit Union (both locations)
First State Bank (both locations)
Hershey Salty Snacks
HyVee
Kurt Goesser State Farm Insurance
Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
Lawrence Habitat for Humanity Restore
LMH Health (both locations)
Lawrence Public Schools - 110 McDonald Dr.
Mainstreet Credit Union
McGrew Real Estate
Meritrust Credit Union
MidAmerican Credit Union
Sylvan Learning Center of Lawrence
Truity Credit Union
Unity Church
Walmart (both locations)
*Bins also located in Eudora & Baldwin



Preparing for 2026–27: Professional Learning & Strategic Planning

New Administrator Onboarding	July 1
Back-to-School Leadership Meetings	July 20–21, 27
AVID Summer Institute	July 22–24
Great Ideas Conference - KSDE	July 27–29
Welcome Breakfast	August 4
Teacher Induction	August 3–6
Student Teacher Orientation	August 6
Welcome PD AM/Readiness PM	August 7
EC-HS Certified & ESP PD	August 10

