GREAT BEND
PUBLIC SCHOOLS • USD 428
Barton County, 1809 24th Street, Great Bend, Kansas 67530

BOARD REPORT

August 11, 2025 **5:00 p.m.**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Board Members Mrs. Jacquie Disque, president; Mr. Aaron Emerson, vice-president; Mr. Chad Burroughs, Mrs. Deanna Essmiller, Mrs. Karen Lindberg, Mr. Randy Wetzel, Mrs. Sara Williams

Communications

The USD 428 Education Foundation – No report, but will meet again in August.

Presentations

- ACappella Washington, DC Trip, 2026

GBHS Choir Director Susan Stambaugh reported that since 1994, more than 1,700 GBHS ACappella students have attended the Washington, DC trip, which is 100% paid for by student fundraising. Choir students will travel to Washington, DC during the 2026 Spring Break. They will sightsee and perform at various locations, including the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in DC, which is by audition only. The Board approved the out-of-state trip.

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
Cody Schmidt, Director of Grounds and Transportation, provided a report to board members at this meeting. He briefly outlined the tasks his department handles during the school year to maintain the grounds at USD 428, along with providing bus transportation for students and managing the fleet of vehicles used for activities and professional development travel.

- ✓ Grounds crews mow 23 acres of district property each week.
- ✓ USD 428 drivers have logged 105,000 miles total. (Activities-65,000, Out-of-town - 40,000.
- ✓ Grounds crews have poured 100 yards of concrete throughout the district.
- ✓ Maintenance crews have completed inspections to make repairs as needed.

In addition to completed projects, upcoming needs include resurfacing the GBMS parking lot and the GBHS student parking lot. Cody oversees the district fleet vehicles and 12 buses, and the 3-year lease agreement renewal is coming up. Challenges include maintaining a full staff, and a bus paraprofessional position is currently unfilled.

District Needs Assessment

Each year, the board of education assesses the educational needs of each district's attendance center. The District Needs Assessment includes cumulative information from the Building Needs Assessments, and

board members were provided with each school's needs assessment. This information is used to address the identified barriers for all students to achieve above level 2 proficiency on state assessments, how overcoming these barriers impacts budget decisions that should be made, and the estimated time needed to meet these goals. Mrs. Blevins reviewed proficiency levels and discussed reasonable goals in June and July. The plan includes developing a deep understanding of the district's assessment system. MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System) is a strategy used nationwide as best practice. USD 428 will continue to refine the process and affirm the direction by taking the steps to build the district's needs, both academically and financially. Chronic absenteeism is being addressed with a different approach at the high school, and positive changes are expected.

2024-2025 Revenue Neutral Rate Review

Assistant Superintendent John Popp explained that if a taxing entity plans to use more property tax revenue in the next budget year than in the current year, even $1 more, they would exceed revenue neutral and are required to hold a public hearing.

Approval to Publish Notice to Exceed Revenue Neutral Rate

The Board approved the GB Tribune's publication of the 2025-2026 Notice to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate and notification of the 2025-2026 RNR Hearing, scheduled at 5:00 p.m., on September 8, 2025, at the District Education Center before the next board meeting.

2025-2026 Budget Review

Assistant Superintendent John Popp presented the 2025-2026 budget to the BOE, emphasizing that long-term planning and maintaining a stable mill levy remain critically important in USD 428. He highlighted the need to take appropriate budget actions to meet the educational needs of each attendance center in the district, as identified in the District Needs Assessment. The proposed budget has a mill levy of 43.166 mills, which amounts to $8,269,840 in total taxes to be levied, representing a decrease of 1.36 mills from the previous year. Expenditures are projected at $80,258,458. The Capital Outlay fund remains at a mill levy of 8.0 mills. This rate is expected to generate roughly $120,000 more in tax revenue than last year, requiring USD 428 to publish a notice to exceed the RNR rate in 2025.

Kansas law mandates all school districts to levy 20 mills for general operations. Using the Kansas school finance equalization formula, USD 428 will collect an estimated $3.2 million in local taxes and receive an estimated $26 million in state funding. This formula, which is based on full-time enrollment, aims to ensure students across Kansas have access to the same high-quality education, no matter which county they live in.

Approval to Publish Budget

The Board approved the 2025-2026 budget publication, fulfilling the ten-day waiting period following the 8/16/25 *Tribune* publication. The budget document is available at the District Education Center for public review during the interim. District administrators will gladly respond to questions from board members and patrons. The Budget Hearing is scheduled at 5:05 p.m. on September 8, 2025, at the District Education Center before the next board meeting.

Financial Audit

Mr. Popp discussed the financial audit engagement letter for the audit of the regulatory basis financial statement and disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statement of USD 428 for the year ended June 30, 2025. The Board approved Adams Brown, LLC. to prepare the audit.

Curriculum and Instruction Report

- Professional Development Outline 2025-2026

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins stated that professional development efforts will align with the district's improvement plan. Professional development days were reviewed, and groups will meet in conference-style sessions on collaboration days to focus on assessments and setting goals.

- Summary of 2024-2025 Professional Development Council (PDC)

The USD 428 Professional Development Council (PDC) is a group of teachers and administrators who, by law, are required to meet regularly, develop a five-year plan, track points, approve Individual Development Plans, and establish and evaluate professional development opportunities. Mrs. Blevins provided the details of the report.

Total points approved:	28,947.40
Total college credits approved:	328
Total certified employee IPDPs on file:	274

- Curriculum Adoption Focus for 2025-2026

  The district is implementing the new K-12 Science curricula. Character Strong curriculum materials will be reviewed, ELA for 7th – 12th grades will pilot new materials this fall, with recommendations coming to the board during the second semester. Several content areas will begin the adoption process, including K-12 Art, and GBHS Theater.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: Next meeting- 8/12/25
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): Next meeting- 8/11/25

Business and Operations Report

- District Safety Committee

Assistant Superintendent John Popp reported that the newly revised Emergency Operations Plan incorporates the SRP (Standard Response Protocol). The SRP uses specific vocabulary for five basic responses to any situation. Building administrators have provided initial staff training, and the SRP vocabulary will be used starting this year. Information for parents will be shared at each school or can be found at greatbendschools.net.

- Capital Outlay Plan

Mr. Popp presented the expected Capital Outlay expenditures for the upcoming year. Capital Outlay funds address the district's long-term sustainability needs, including maintaining roofs, infrastructure, HVAC, grounds, playgrounds, equipment, and security measures. The plan estimates $3.1 million in capital outlay needs. Storm shelters and playgrounds are items that are out of the budget of capital outlay funds.

- Project Updates

Mr. Popp presented photos of the following completed projects. discuss updates on the following projects.

- GBHS- boiler update, gymnasium paint refresh
- GBMS- camera install, entry concrete, gymnasium floor refinish
- Eisenhower Elementary – U-Drive, playground swing replacement
- GBRC basketball court addition west of Eisenhower is in progress

- Front Door Lease Information

  PTRC will relocate if Washington School is demolished. Personnel visited the Front Door space to consider it as a potential relocation option. The staff measured existing cabinetry and shelving units and found the space to be too small for their equipment and needs. The administration will continue exploring other options. Mr. Popp noted that the PTRC is fine remaining where it is until a suitable location is found.

Superintendent's Report

- Athletic Physicals Update

The University of Kansas Health Center, in collaboration with USD 428, provided free school sports physicals for 214 Great Bend Middle and High School student-athletes earlier this month. USD 428 is grateful to the medical community for providing this service.

- Enrollment Update

The preliminary enrollment of 2,895 indicates four fewer students than the official enrollments last September. Mr. Thexton noted that late enrollments are expected before school starts, and final numbers will be available later. Little Panthers Preschool has 300 students enrolled, making it the largest elementary school in the district.

- Student Transfer Request Report

Determinations were made regarding elementary school transfer requests for the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. Thexton received fifty-six requests. The basic standard is that students attend their area's designated school, with consideration given to special situation requests based on classroom sizes and the assigned designated school. Thirteen of the requests were denied.

- Summer Meal Program Update

In June and July 2024, USD 428 School Food Service personnel facilitated a total of 54,386 meals (breakfast packets and lunch packets). Meals were available for any child under 18 years old at three locations. The program continues to grow and is an important service within our community. The central kitchen staff is appreciated for their hard work.

- Board Governance Document

The Board Governance Document defines the role of a school board member, outlining unwritten rules, and general information is updated to reflect current year information for board members to refer to.

- Personnel Update

Mr. Thexton reported that 40 teachers attended New Teacher Orientation at the DEC for a week of orientation and support. Many new teachers have previous teaching experience and will be a great addition to the staff. Mr. Thexton summarized personnel changes for the current school year.

70 position changes

- 8 Retirements
- 28 Resignations
- 16 Transfers
- 30 new-to-district hires
- 3 position reductions (technology coaches)
- 13 not fully licensed staff
- 0 positions added
- 2 Yet to be filled: GBHS- English, Journalism/Audio Video

- KASB Annual Conference in Wichita, Ks

Superintendent Thexton informed the Board of Education members about the upcoming annual conference of the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) from November 14-16 in Wichita, KS. The conference offers a great opportunity to enhance understanding of BOE operations and to meet and exchange knowledge with other board members and administrators.

- Approval of Contributions
  The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.
  - Strawbridge Reward Incentive contributions for the following schools have been received.

School	Amount
Eisenhower	$589.82
Lincoln	$604.14
Park	$481.08
Riley	$695.68
Little Panthers Preschool	$819.25

  - The First Presbyterian Church Mission Committee plans to donate $100.00 to each of the following schools for student clothing as needed: Little Panther Preschool, Eisenhower, Jefferson, Lincoln, Park, and Riley elementary schools.
  - The Great Bend High School Athletic Booster would like to donate a pavilion (and all associated costs) to be placed near the Booster Club shed on the Northeast side of Memorial Stadium. The Pavilion will be used at events held at Memorial Stadium for both the GBHS Athletic Booster Club and USD 428. The estimated cost of the project is $34,000.

Financial Report

Mr. Popp presented the warrants, financial report, travel summary, energy report, unencumbered cash balance details, and health insurance status to board members.

Consent Agenda

Board members approved the following items.

- Approval of BOE Meeting Minutes: July 14, 2025
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report: none

Upcoming Events Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- **First Day of School:** August 14, 2025, for K-6, GBMS Grade 7, and GBHS Grade 9
- **First Day of School:** August 15, 2025, for Grades 8,10, 11, and 12
- **BOE Luncheon Meeting:** Wednesday, August 27, 2025, Lincoln Elementary School
- **BOE Revenue Neutral Hearing and Budget Hearing:** The Budget Hearing and RNR Hearing are scheduled for September 8, 2025, at the District Education Center.
- **BOE Regular Meeting:** The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2025, at the District Education Center, immediately following the RNR Hearing and the Budget Hearing

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.