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

BOARD REPORT

November 10, 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

- Newly elected USD 428 Board of Education Candidates

Mr. Thexton announced the results of the November 5th general election and congratulated Sarah Schenek and Barbara Thoren, who will begin four-year terms starting January 12, 2026. Deanna Essmiller and Chad Burroughs will complete their terms in January.

- USD 428 Education Foundation

The USD 428 Education Foundation's Annual Dinner & Auction will take place on November 13, 2025, at the Great Bend Events Center. The theme is the Red and Black Ball, with a business casual dress code.

Recognitions / Presentations

- Kansas Teacher of the Year

Two deserving educators from Great Bend USD 428 have been nominated for the 2025 USD 428 Teachers of the Year. Honorees Lori McLeland, an English teacher at Great Bend Middle School, and Mandy Stansfield, a fifth-grade teacher at Riley Elementary School, will advance to the 2026 Kansas Teacher of the Year competition. The Kansas Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding teachers and highlights their work among colleagues and peers statewide. Congratulations, Lori and Mandy!

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
Andrea Bauer, Public Information Director, presented a report to the board members at this meeting.

- ✓ The Public Information Director manages strategic crisis communication for the district, including coordinating with administration, families, and crisis communication efforts. Various platforms are used as communication tools, including:
  - School Messenger, an application valued at USD 428, is a user-friendly tool that provides busy parents, students, and staff with a dependable way to stay connected with their school or district and communicate effectively.
  - The digital USD 428 Relay email sent to all staff highlights positive developments in the district. Social media remains a key tool for connecting with the community, and Andrea communicates with the

designated employees in each building who post on social media, empowering each school to use its voice to share positive updates on the good things students and staff are doing in their building.

- ✓ The district's management of print and digital content, photography, and videography ensures the GB logo is easily recognizable and effectively promoted across the district. Public outreach promotes transparency and open communication.
- ✓ Andrea played a key role in managing the recent ad campaign aimed at encouraging visitors to view the website and apply for open positions. This campaign, along with the addition of a Substitute Liaison position filled by Mr. Karl McCulley, resulted in twenty-seven new substitute teachers joining the district this year.
- ✓ Challenges include an outdated website that needs updating. Key features to consider are simplified navigation, highlighting upcoming events, language translation that meets federal requirements, and seamless integration with the district's current software platforms, such as Skyward. Andrea is part of the district committee working on specifications to issue an RFQ. The team will review the RFQ, listen to presentations, evaluate them, and present the results to the Board in February or March.

Approval of Title VI B (3-21) and VI B (3-5) Early Childhood Flow-Through Budget Application

The district provided public notification of the Title *VI B* and *VI B ECH* budget, which covers salaries for licensed special education staff, and the budget application was available for public review at the Barton County Cooperative of Special Education for thirty days. The 2025-2026 application amounts to $1,125,038 for Title *VI B* pass-through funds ($5,018 more than the prior year) and $43,104 for ECH ($2,270 more than the prior year). The Board approved the Title *VI B* and *VI B ECH* budget application.

Approval of Computer Purchase

The district has a rotation cycle for electronic purchases to maintain up-to-date technology, and computers are on a five-year rotation. The Board of Education approved the following device purchases. A second order of devices will be presented to the Board in the spring.

Device	Qty	Each	Total Expenditure
Eisen/Riley Teacher Laptops	80	$759.74	$60,779.20
HS Computer Lab and stock Desktops	40	$640.75	$25,630.00
Teacher Chromebooks	50	$399.21	$19,960.50
		Total	**$106,369.70**

Approval to Release Web Design Specifications

The Board approved releasing the RFQ design specifications to invite qualified web designers to submit proposals for a new and updated district website. A committee of USD 428 employees will evaluate the proposals in February, and the results will be presented to the Board for approval of the selected firm.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- Teacher Evaluations

Teachers are evaluated annually by school principals, following guidelines from state statutes, Board of Education policies, and Negotiated Agreement policies. Principals must complete the first-semester evaluations by November 18.

- USD 428 Balanced Assessment System

The Balanced Assessment System used in USD 428 and several other larger school districts aligns with KSDE expectations. This year, the district will implement the Balanced Assessment System, using both formative and summative methods tracked through Fastbridge to identify risks and set standards for monitoring students' progress. The data will be used to adjust instruction and determine students' tiers. Proficiency screeners will be more in-depth and similar to state assessments, challenging students with more complex questions and concepts, and will be rolled out in December. Formative Assessments provide immediate, actionable data that guides and modifies instruction. The Kansas Assessment Program will serve as the Summative Assessments, with data available months later. Feedback on these assessments will be provided after the first of the year.

- USD 428 Data Review

Mr. Thexton shared the results of the fall FastBridge universal screener and the spring 2025 Kansas State Assessments (KAP) in English Language Arts, Math, and Science. The results are close to the state averages for the grade levels, but the goal of the balanced assessment is to help students reach a higher level of learning; roughly 3% would mean increasing 4-5 students per grade level in each building.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: next meeting 12/2/25
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): 11/3/25 minutes, next meeting 12/1/25

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- Project Updates

Board members and the administration will discuss updates on the following projects.

- GBHS HVAC Project: Mr. Popp provided details on the HVAC replacement for GBHS to replace units that service the auditorium, the administrative offices, and classrooms above the offices. The Board approved the project for $1,202,113 via procurement with Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA). The project will be completed during the summer of 2026.
- Professional Services Proposal: The Board approved a professional services proposal from Innovative Groups, through procurement with Purchasing Cooperative of America (PCA), to provide initial construction design guidelines, architect shop drawings, and bid and project administration. Additionally, the engineers will develop roof, flashing, and gutter replacement options for the flat roof section of the Panther Athletic Center, the GBHS Gymnasium, and all roof areas of Park Elementary except for the west addition. Innovative Groups will manage the bid process, ensure that all bidders meet the project requirements equally, and oversee the projects once contractor bids are reviewed and selected in February. Completion of this project will be during the summer months.
- Upcoming projects:
  - Purchase and install security cameras at Riley and Park Elementary schools
  - Replace Fire Panels at GBHS, Park Elementary, and Riley Elementary schools

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- Parent Teacher Conference Feedback and Discussion

GBNEA conducted a survey after this year's Parent-Teacher Conferences to collect feedback on the change in dates and times from previous years. Ninety-one teachers responded, and a clear majority—61.5%—prefer to return to the previous schedule of Monday evening (5–8 p.m.), Tuesday evening (5–8 p.m.), and Thursday afternoon (1–4 p.m.), with Thursday morning as a half day for students and Friday off for both students and staff. GBNEA would like to suggest reinstating this schedule for the spring conferences and

reviewing other possible options for the 2026–2027 school year. Further review will be conducted, and adjustments may be made before the next parent-teacher conferences in February.

- Non-Resident Enrollment Update
  - 2026-2027 Open enrollment 1/1/26 – 6/15/26

Mr. Thexton discussed nonresident enrollments and the state-level policy that allows students to select and transfer to a district of their choice rather than attend the district based on their residence. Enrollment numbers help determine practical classroom capacities, and applications from out-of-resident students must be submitted by June 15. Elementary placement is determined by the number of students at each school, and determines where nonresident students will be assigned. USD 428 currently has 108 students enrolled who do not live in the district.

- Virtual School Update

Great Bend High School's virtual program, in partnership with ESSDACK learning center, provides an alternative pathway for credit recovery and graduation after completing 25 semester credits. USD 428 receives 60%, while ESSDACK gets 40% of the FTE funding for each of the 29 students in the program.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- Great Bend High School Athletics requests approval to accept the following contributions.

Various donors contributed $15,000 through the USD 428 Education Foundation towards the purchase of two golf simulators for the GBHS golf teams.

- Reward Incentive contributions for the following schools have been received.

School	Amount	Company
GBHS Wrestling team	$320.08	Indentifications Co.

Financial Report

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

Executive Session

The Board recessed into executive session to discuss an individual employee's performance pursuant to non-elected personnel under KOMA. No action was taken after the session.

Consent Agenda

Board members approved the following items.

- Approval of BOE Meeting Minutes: October 13, 2025, and October 29, 2025
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:

  Licensed Resignation

  ✓ Mrs. Avery Gates, Teacher of Grade 4 at Eisenhower Elementary School *(effective December 19, 2025)*

  Licensed Resignation and Separation of Agreement

  ✓ Mr. Tyler Rydman, Teacher of Computer Technology at GB Middle School

Executive Session

The Board recessed into executive session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation pursuant to non-elected personnel exception under KOMA. No action was taken after the session.

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- USD 428 Education Foundation Annual Dinner & Auction: November 13, 2025
- Annual KASB Convention- on November 14-16, 2025, in Wichita, KS
- BOE Luncheon Meeting- at noon on November 19, 2025 (Jefferson Elementary)
- Thanksgiving Recess- No School- November 26-28, 2025
- BOE Regular Meeting- The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2025, at the District Education Center.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.