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

BOARD REPORT

December 8, 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

- USD 428 Education Foundation

The USD 428 Education Foundation's Annual Dinner & Auction was held on November 13, 2025, at the Great Bend Events Center. Nearly 200 people attended the Red and Black Ball, and the event raised around $20,000 to use for mini-grants issued in the spring.

Recognitions / Presentations

- Recognition of Board Members' term ending

Mr. Thexton proudly recognized and thanked two Board of Education members whose terms are ending. Their dedication, leadership, and countless hours of service to our students, staff, and community, along with their commitment, have strengthened our schools and helped build a brighter future for the children we serve. He expressed gratitude for their vision, hard work, and the impact they have made, and he wishes them continued success in all their future endeavors.

- Deanna Essmiller- two four-year terms, January 2018 – January 2026, served on the IBB team and the Supplemental Salary committee
- Chad Burroughs -one four-year term, January 2022 – January 2026, served on the Education Foundation

- R.O.S.E Award

The Board of Education's ongoing efforts to honor individuals or groups for their contributions to the school district led to the creation of the R.O.S.E. (Recognizing Outstanding Support of Education) Award. The latest recipient of a R.O.S.E. award, Lindsay Luttrell, will be recognized.

When a student in the music room started choking on a donut, Ms. Lindsay Luttrell, Jefferson Elementary's music teacher, acted quickly and performed the Heimlich maneuver to clear the student's airway. Thanks to Lindsay's prompt response and knowledge of the proper procedure, the student is now fine. Thank you, Lindsay, for taking care of our students!

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
Kristy Alvord, Director of Food Service, presented a report to the board members at this meeting.

- ✓ Kristy Alvord employs 38 people. Currently, there are two open management positions, one open server position, and two part-time positions. The team serves an average of 735 breakfasts and 1,930 lunches

each day. For handmade meals, USD 428 purchases goods from local vendors Golden Belt Beef, Hudson Flour Mill, and Highland Dairy as often as possible.

- ✓ Federal regulations have mandated lower sugar and sodium levels in foods. By 2027, sodium limits will tighten further, and Kristy and her team will develop innovative ways to enhance flavor while offering healthier options.
- ✓ The Buy American Act for Food requires schools to purchase US-grown and processed food for meals, although exceptions are allowed when the food is unavailable or significantly more expensive; her department must thoroughly document the inventory. Strict rules govern the procurement process, and domestic and non-domestic spending percentages must be tracked and reported. Prices for domestic supplies continue to rise, creating budget challenges for the department.
- ✓ Kristy reported that School districts can participate in a Universal Free Breakfast program, which aims to provide a nutritious breakfast at no cost to students, regardless of their status. Board of Education members were receptive to the idea of helping students start the day on the right foot and approved $20,000 in funding to support the program from January 2026 through the end of the school year, and will evaluate the program after next semester. GBHS now offers second-chance breakfasts between the first and second hours, increasing the number of breakfasts served.

First Reading of BOE Policy

The following recommendations have been made by the KASB Legal/Policy Services Staff to board policies. The policy revisions, presented as first readings, will be reviewed by the BOE and returned for further action at a later meeting.

Revision	BCBK	Executive Session
Revision	BG	Membership
Revision	IHF	Graduation Requirements
New	IIBE	Use of Artificial Intelligence *(AI)*
Revision	IKB	Controversial Issues
Revision (TC)	IKCA	Human Sexuality Education
Revision (TC)	IKCA Form	Human Sexuality Education Form
Revision	IKD	Religion in Curricular or School-Sponsored Activities
Revision	IKDA Form	Activity Participation Opt-Out Form
Revision	IKDA	Religious Objections to Activities
Revision	JCAC	Interrogation and Investigation
Revision	JDDC Form	Bullying Plan
New	JQI	Adult Students
Revision	KM	Visitors

First Reading of Theatre Curriculum

Holly Johnson, GBHS Theatre Instructor, and Mrs. Blevins presented their recommendation to adopt Theatre resources for GBHS. 'Introduction to Theatre Arts Volume 1' for the Theatre Basics class and 'Volume 2' for the Advanced Theatre class are published by Pioneer Drama Service. Both books encourage independent learning and practice, and provide a structured curriculum aligned with state standards. The board approved the annual purchase of $1,016 for the consumable student workbooks. The Stagecraft class will not make any changes due to the structure of the class and the lack of resources available.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- Curriculum Adoption Updates
  - The Pre-Kindergarten team is evaluating strengths and weaknesses and will determine which programs best align with their goals.
  - The K-12 Social Studies team is reviewing resources and potential programs, examining samples, and will have pilot recommendations ready by spring 2026. Samples are available for all teachers who teach the content to review.
  - K-12 art teachers are reviewing online supplemental materials and resources to enhance their current curriculum and will present their recommendations to the board in February 2026.
  - The 7-12 ELA curriculum resource adoption is piloting new materials this fall, and their recommendations will be presented to the board during the second semester.
  - Band and Orchestra committees are finalizing their curriculum selections and will present their proposals to the board in the spring of 2026.
  - Xello is a career tracking software designed to help secondary students explore career paths. GBHS is currently piloting a new feature to track post-secondary assets, which are a new graduation requirement starting with the class of 2028.
- Standards Proficiency Screener Update

Mrs. Blevins provided an update on the implementation of standards-based proficiency screeners in grades 3 through high school. The screeners are currently open, and the data will be available after the holiday break. The quick turnaround helps identify learning gaps, enabling interventions to be adjusted accordingly. To demonstrate the complexity of the screening questions, Mrs. Blevins will present sample questions similar to those students are required to answer to board members next month.

- KESA Update

Mrs. Blevins explained that KESA is the state accreditation process all schools must complete. KESA standards are based on state assessments and benchmarked against state averages. Since the plan was updated last January, the district has been refining and aligning it. The USD 428 district leadership team will meet with other districts in Newton in January at the KSDE School Improvement Day workshop to collaborate and gather feedback with Newton and Winfield. Balanced assessments will be the next focus. Updates will be provided at subsequent meetings.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: Minutes 12/2/25, next meeting 1/6/26
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): 12/1/25 minutes, next meeting 1/5/26

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- Facility Mapping Cooperation with Barton County

The state of Kansas has issued grants to fund the mapping of certain facilities to support 911 and emergency management. Schools are among the designated sites for digital mapping to ensure 911 and law enforcement have precise maps of school buildings during emergencies. USD 428 is collaborating with Barton County and 911 to evaluate companies that can provide this service. The grant will cover the initial costs, while ongoing maintenance will be the district's responsibility.

- Annual Risk Management Report

Mr. Popp reviewed the annual Workers' Comp risk management report, which covers modification factors affecting annual premiums. Slips, trips, and falls contribute to many work-related accidents, and wearing appropriate footwear will decrease the number of injuries reported.

- Safety Updates

Several members of the USD 428 Safety Committee attended the Raptor Safety Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Many topics are being brought back for the safety committee to review. Subcommittees are refining the disaster response process, including a reunification plan with specific communication instructions, transportation, and other elements to reconnect students with their parents after emergencies effectively.
A subcommittee is developing a behavior threat assessment process to identify, evaluate, and manage individuals who pose a threat of violence to themselves or others by offering appropriate supports and interventions instead of simply applying discipline. The severity of the threat will be assessed based on intent and warning signs. Administration will take steps to provide support and suitable discipline. The committee also works with emergency services to hold roundtable discussions on potential scenarios.

- Project Updates

Mr. Popp discussed updates on the following projects.

- GBHS, Park Roofs

Roof specifications will be prepared for bidding in January for Park Elementary and the High School Gym. Innovative Groups is designing guidelines, creating architectural roof drawings, and preparing bid documents for the flat-roof sections of the Panther Athletic Center, the GBHS Gymnasium, and all roof areas of Park Elementary, excluding the west addition. Innovative Groups will oversee the bidding process, ensure all bidders meet project requirements, and supervise the projects after the contractor bids are reviewed and selected in February. The roof projects are scheduled for completion during the summer.

- Fire Panels

The district is seeking quotes for the Fire Panel replacement project at GB High School, Park and Riley Elementary schools. Mr. Popp will continue to bring updates to the board.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- USD 428 Education Foundation Mini-grants

Awarded Education Foundation grant applications support innovative teaching techniques for USD 428 educators to benefit their students. The online application will be emailed to teachers in March. Mini-grants are awarded in the spring for classroom use the following school year.

- Snow Day Decision Process

District administrators follow a specific process to assess storm severity. The process begins at 4:45 a.m., with the team driving routes, collecting weather data, evaluating the safety of buildings, sidewalks, and parking lots, holding a meeting to review the findings, and ultimately making a decision by 6:00 a.m. Mr. Thexton provided additional details, noting that there may be times when a two-hour delay would be appropriate instead of canceling the entire school day.

- USD 428 District Site Council

The District Site Council includes several community members who meet for one hour, up to four times a year, to discuss current issues related to USD 428 Great Bend Schools. This semester, the council has been briefed on Standard Response Protocol, Special Education, and 504 plans for individual students. Topics for next semester include assessments, student performance, school funding, and facility needs.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- The following USD 428 educators wish to apply for and receive Credit Union of America Fall 2025 TGIF Grants.

Teacher		Amount Granted
Amy Stein	GBMS	$500 to purchase digital media literacy supplies
Robyn Heitschmidt	GBMS	$940 to purchase 5 Dino-Lite USB digital microscopes to view rocks and minerals.
Hillary Emerson	LPP	$1,000 to purchase various seating alternatives that help with sensory needs at the PreK level.

- Park Elementary wishes to accept the following contributions:

Park Booster Club	$50	Front door artwork
Park Booster Club	$80	Veteran's Day lunches for veterans

- Park, Eisenhower, and Riley Elementary schools wish to receive a $500 contribution from Wheatland Electric.
- Gifting Forward Foundation wishes to contribute $250 to Lincoln Elementary School to celebrate the school's contributions to the Power the Pantry food drive.
- GBMS Music in Motion wishes to accept a $500 performance contribution from Hays (High Plains) Kansas.
- The GBHS Activities Department wishes to accept the following contributions:
  - Bauer, Pike, Baer, Wary, Carroll, & Gunn LLC contributed $350 for Halloween Activities.
  - Panther Booster Club contributed $7,220 towards the Golf Simulator project
  - Panther Booster Club contributed $4,668 for GBHS students' entry to get into the post-season games.
  - Marmie Motors Auto Group contributed $2,400 for touchdown incentives.
  - Ohiopyle Prints contributed $61.33 for apparel reward incentives.
  - BSN Sports contributed $25.63 for apparel reward incentives.

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.

Consent Agenda

Board members approved the following items.

- Approval of BOE Meeting Minutes: November 10, 2025, and November 19, 2025
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:
  Licensed Appointment
  - ✓ Ms. Ekaterina (Kate) Semeniuk, Teacher of Grade 4 at Eisenhower Elementary School *(effective January 5, 2026)*

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.

- BOE Luncheon Meeting- There is no lunch meeting in December
- Winter Recess- December 22, 2025, through January 5, 2026. (January 5 is a teacher workday)
- BOE Regular Meeting- The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2026, at the District Education Center.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.