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

BOARD REPORT

January 12, 2026 **5:00 p.m.**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Board Members Mrs. Jacquie Disque, president; Mr. Aaron Emerson, vice-president; Mrs. Karen Lindberg, Ms. Barbara Thoren, Mrs. Sarah Schenek, Mr. Randy Wetzel, Mrs. Sara Williams

Communications

- Board Member Comments
  Board member Randy Wetzel commented that he recently witnessed a GBHS Esports competition and was quite impressed with the new sport, which the BOE approved for addition in October 2025. Students are engaged, and the class is very well run; it is a fantastic addition to the GBHS student activities.
- USD 428 Education Foundation
  The USD 428 Education Foundation trustees will meet at their regularly scheduled meeting to discuss foundation business.

Recognitions / Presentations

- School Board Recognition

USD 428 Administration recognizes board members for their crucial role as elected officials in our community and schools. These extraordinary people volunteer to tackle the enormous task of governing the district. Their actions and decisions shape the present and future lives of our children. Thank you, USD 428 Board of Education, for your time and commitment to our schools!

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
Ryan Axman, Director of Information Technology, presented a report to the board members at this meeting.

- ✓ ✓ Ryan Axman reported that the IT department consists of two sections: Software and Hardware. USD 428 employs three software technicians responsible for 100 curriculum programs, including Skyward and the KIDS system. In addition, the software technicians track and sync data, assign Chromebooks, and coordinate login information. This team will be responsible for camera security, configuration, and file exports; the door badge system; and the conversion to the new website. There are six hardware technicians responsible for maintaining 750 district laptops, 3,000 Chromebooks, projectors, and televisions in every classroom, 350 printers, 15 file servers, and 450 wireless access points throughout the district.
- ✓ USD 428 is a one-to-one district that began in the 2014-2015 school year, made possible by a generous contributor who donated enough funds to purchase a computer for every student in the district. The

district has since maintained up-to-date technology through a rotation, purchasing laptops every 5 years and Chromebooks every 3 years to ensure students have access to current technology.

- ✓ Upcoming summer projects include
  - Replacing 36 network switches and 215 wireless access points to ensure connectivity.
  - Updating the computer lab at Great Bend High School.

Second Reading of BOE Policy

At the meeting of 12/8/2025, BOE members heard the first reading of KASB-recommended new and revised policies. At this second reading, the Board approved the recommended policy updates listed below.

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
USD 428 Revision	KG	Use of School Facilities by Community Groups

Approval of 2024-2025 Business Audit

The 2024-2025 business audit report and governance letter of AdamsBrown, LLC, have been prepared. Delaney Smith, CPA, presented the report, noting that the audit went very well overall, with an Adverse and Unmodified opinion and no significant findings. USD 428 complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements referenced above that could have a direct and material effect on each of its major federal programs. Board members approved the audit results.

Approval to Adopt K-12 Art Supplemental Curriculum Resources

The K-12 Art Instructors, Shannon Wedel, Sergio Ramirez, and Anna Popp, presented their recommendation for curriculum resources, *The Art of Education,* a web-based support curriculum aligned with state standards that features classroom-focused strategies and resources designed to strengthen daily teaching practice. *The Art of Education Professional Suite* provides art teachers with on-demand instructional support materials and strategies, as well as professional learning tailored to their needs. *The Art of Education* is intended to support, not replace, the current curriculum adopted ten years ago. The board approved the $63,441.13 curriculum supplement from the Title IV budget.

Approval of GBMS Program of Studies

The GB Middle School Program of Studies book outlines all courses available to Great Bend Middle School students. GBMS Principal Mr. Myron Ellegood discussed several updates to course descriptions, wording, and curriculum changes previously approved by the Curriculum Steering Committee. The Board moved to approve the 2026-2027 Program of Studies at this first reading.

Approval of GBHS Program of Studies and CTE Program of Studies

The high school Program of Studies book outlines all courses available to Great Bend High School students. GBHS Principal Mr. Brock Funke discussed several updates to course descriptions and wording, previously approved by the Curriculum Steering Committee. Changes to course and pathway names were made to make classes more appealing to students, clarify course content, or comply with state-mandated updates. Career and Technical Education class names have also been updated to be clearer about content and more appealing to students. The Board moved to approve the 2026-2027 GBHS Program of Studies at this first reading.

Approval to Purchase ELA K-2 Literacy Materials

As part of the K-6 ELA curriculum, the administration recommended that the Board approve the purchase of HMH K-2 Reading Decodables to reinforce foundational K-2 skills and increase student engagement. The cost of the Reading Decodables is $26,018.01. The Board approved the purchase of the K-2 literacy materials.

Fundraiser Requests for 2026-2027

Advanced approval is required for direct sales fundraising to support the organization fundraising plans for the 2026-2027 year. According to board policy, "Each fundraising activity will be placed on the calendar in such a way as to avoid too many fundraisers taking place at one time." Requests from organization representatives at each school detailing the timing and types of fundraisers were approved by the Board for the 2026-2027 school year. Fast Food nights and other event-type fundraisers may be added throughout the year.

Approval to Request 2026-2027 E-Rate Funding

E-Rate is a federal funding program that provides discounts to schools for eligible broadband and telecommunications services. Services are provided through Nextech. IT Director Ryan Axman explained the program, and the Board approved the 2026-2027 E-Rate funding requests, as itemized below.

Item	Cost	Less E-Rate	USD 428 Cost	Details
Wide Area Network	$ 45,319.80	$ 36,255.84	$ 9,063.96	*Nextech Contract- Year 3 of 5*
Internet Access 5GB	$ 20,400.00	$ 16,320.00	$ 4,080.00	*Nextech Contract-Year 1 of 5*
Network Switches	$188,619.31	$150,895.45	$ 37,723.86	*District Wide- Nextech one time fee*
Access points / licenses	$242,457.43	$193,965.94	$ 48,491.49	*For MS and HS -Nextech one time fee*
Total	*$496,796.54*	*$397,437.23*	**$ 99,359.31**	

E-Rate funds do not cover cellular, local, or long-distance phone charges.

Approval to Extend Officer Term to July

The S.B. 130 law passed in April 2019 changed the month school boards elect the board president and vice-president to January instead of July. USD 428 wishes to extend the term of the current president, Jacquie Disque, and vice-president, Aaron Emerson, for the remainder of the school year. With the adoption of this resolution, the Board approved the resolution and will elect officers at the July organizational meeting. Furthermore, the meeting dates and times for the remainder of the school year were reaffirmed.

Approval to Release Roof Specifications

Great Bend High School and Park Elementary are scheduled for roof replacement under the Capital Outlay budget. and Dirk Davis, Director of Maintenance, and Chris Sele of Innovative Groups, a Wichita-based engineering firm specializing in energy analysis and HVAC system improvements, discussed the project specifications, noting that the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing on the roof should be handled and removed by qualified contractors before the new roof is installed. All roof work, including guttering, flashing, and appropriate sloping, will be completed. The Board approved releasing the specifications to solicit bids from qualified contractors. Innovative Groups will oversee the bidding process, and results will be presented to the Board in February.

GBHS HVAC Project Update

Dirk Davis and Chris Sele presented the initial construction design guidelines and the GBHS architect's drawings from Innovative Groups, a Wichita-based engineering firm specializing in energy analysis and HVAC system improvements. The HVAC demo plan covers the basement, main level, and upper level, including ductwork, associated piping and wiring, and sheetrock repair. The system has not been updated since the late 1990s. Although it still functions, it needs a revamp due to frequent maintenance and repairs. The project will be completed by August 1st.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- Standards Proficiency Screener Update

Mrs. Blevins provided an update on the implementation of standards-based proficiency screeners for 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, allowing interventions to be adjusted accordingly. To demonstrate the complexity of the screening questions, Mrs. Blevins presented sample questions similar to those students are required to answer.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Integration Team

Kindric Castro, Chair of the District AI Integration Team, shared information on implementing AI in the classroom. The goal is to first teach teachers how to harness artificial intelligence to enhance instruction, learning, and student career readiness while maintaining privacy, equity, and professional judgment. The integration team aims to design, guide, and assess the responsible adoption of AI to improve learning, support staff, safeguard students, and align with district standards. This will be a district-wide, coordinated effort to enhance instruction through guided adoption and to safeguard students by helping them understand the values and concerns of AI. The district uses Google Workspace with Gemini as the AI model. Mrs. Blevins, Kindric, will form a committee to develop a specific implementation roadmap that includes policies, procedures, safety reviews, data compliance, and teacher and student development.

- Proficiency Screener Update

Mrs. Blevins provided sample questions and an example of data report forms from the recent second-quarter proficiency screeners administered in grades 3-HS. The reports graph the students' predicted scores based on past performance.

- KESA Update

KESA is the state accreditation process that all schools must complete, and Title I schools must submit an improvement plan. KESA standards are based on state assessments and benchmarked against state averages. District leadership teams from USD 428, Newton, and Winfield will meet at a KSDE School Improvement Day workshop to collaborate and share best practices on school improvement. The DLT and BLT will solidify the plan, finalize, and submit the KESA to KSDE within 60 days.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: Minutes 1/6/26, next meeting 2/2/26
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): 1/6/26 minutes, next meeting 2/3/26

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- Project Updates

Mr. Popp discussed updates on the following projects.

- GBHS, Park Roofs

Innovative Groups has developed guidelines, prepared architectural roof drawings, and bid documents for the flat-roof sections of the Panther Athletic Center and the GBHS Gymnasium, and for 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 gathering information 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.

- Cameras

The schedule to add cameras continues, but the costs of plug-and-play cameras keep rising.

- GBHS Countertops

Durable solid-surface counters are installed in the GBHS Commons restrooms. Bathroom flooring will be needed in the future because the tiles keep popping off and breaking. These projects were last completed in the late 1990s.

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 available to teachers in March, and applications will be reviewed in April. Mini-grants are awarded in the spring for classroom use the following school year.

- IBB Meeting

Members representing GB-NEA and the Board of Education will tentatively meet in March 2026 at the District Education Center for Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB). The negotiation session will begin with IBB training for participants.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

  - Members of PEO Chapter DU, a local sisterhood organization, wish to contribute $590 to the USD 428 lunch program to provide lunches for students who may not otherwise have access to a balanced, nutritious lunch.

- Mark Dewald Memorial Contributions designated for the Great Bend High School Band program have been received. The amount is $970.
- The GBHS Activities Department wishes to accept the following contribution for the Christmas Clash Wrestling tournament.
  - $500 Murphy Tractor
  - $500 Equity Bank
  - $500 Kern Floor Service
  - $500 Magna Dry
  - $200 Barton County Community College
- Holly Oyedeji, GBMS Librarian, wishes to apply for a Walmart Spark Good Local grant for up to $5,000. If granted, funds would be used to purchase updated library seating.
- Headway Marketing, LLC contributed a $1,000 Chevrolet GMC Back-to-School incentive, designated for Riley Elementary, by Marmie Chevrolet GMC.
- Reward Incentive contributions for the following schools have been received.

School	Amount	Company
Lincoln Elementary	$ 30.20	Box Tops
Jefferson Elementary	$142.70	Box Tops
Eisenhower Elementary	$393.30	Box Tops
GBMS Wrestling	$320.08	Identifications Company, LLC

- USD 428 Food Service wishes to accept a $1,000 contribution from Ryan & Shanda DeYoung to be used toward outstanding student lunch balances and to provide a hot lunch for students who would otherwise be unable to receive one due to overdue balances.
- USD 428 wishes to accept a $517.50 contribution from Credit Union of America to provide a meal for New Teacher Orientation in August, 2025.

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: December 8, 2025
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:
  Licensed Retirement
  - ✓ Mrs. Shelly Post, Early Childhood Special Education Specialist *(effective 6/1/26)*

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- BOE Luncheon Meeting- The next lunch meeting is January 28, 2026, at Riley Elementary.
- BOE Regular Meeting- The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2026, at the District Education Center.
- Winter Homecoming- Friday, February 13, 2026, with Garden City

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.