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

BOARD REPORT

February 9, 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

- USD 428 Education Foundation
  The USD 428 Education Foundation trustees will meet at their regularly scheduled meeting to discuss foundation business.

Recognitions / Presentations

- 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, Tacoa Underwood, will be recognized.

Mrs. Tacoa Underwood was serving as a crossing guard in front of the school on 24th after school. The light was red, and people were about to cross the street. A student was 4 or 5 steps into the street when a car failed to stop. Tacoa was aware of the surroundings and recognized the danger. She put herself at risk and quickly moved the student to safety. Thank you, Tacoa, for going above and beyond to prioritize student safety!

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.

Tonya Miller, Director of Human Resources, presented a report to the board members at this meeting.

- ✓ USD 428 currently employs 670 full-time employees, 220 certified teachers, 16 instructional support positions, and 430 classified employees. There are also 20 part-time employees, and 29 Rule-10 positions (Rule 10 is a KSHSAA-certified coach not affiliated with a teaching position).
- ✓ The Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP) is a four-year competency-based program for unlicensed staff aspiring to become certified teachers. The State Grant Act provides $2,700 of gap funding after financial aid and Workforce One. Fifteen apprentices are currently in the program, and HR is now accepting applications for fall 2026.
- ✓ Beginning the 2026-2027 school year, the district will transition from American Fidelity to Kansas Board Solutions (KBS), a benefit insurance subsidiary of KASB. KBS provides modernized online enrollment and is cost-effective for participants. Employees will be able to review plans, view videos, and make insurance decisions on an online platform. Enrollment will be geared towards August, and the district expects this to be a positive change for all employees. In-person support will still be available if needed.

- ✓ Job descriptions are being reviewed and updated for consistency and compliance. The online program has the potential to transition into an automated annual evaluation system related directly to job-specific duties.
- ✓ Job fairs are an effective strategy for hiring new employees. A shortage of substitute teachers persists, but adding a new substitute support position at the start of the year will provide resources to improve sub retention. Karl McCulley, Substitute Liaison, reported positive growth in sub recruitment. Mr. McCulley taught 8th-grade Social Studies for many years, and his mentoring experience has been valuable. Since he started in this new role, 40 new substitute teachers have been onboarded.

Approval of Roof Quotes

Sections of Great Bend High School and Park Elementary are scheduled for roof replacement under the Capital Outlay budget. The Board approved the lowest bid from Roofmasters Roofing & Sheet Metal Co., with alternatives totaling $747,244.00. Innovative Groups will oversee the process and ensure all project requirements are met.

Approval of Community Service Day

GBHS National Honor Society student officers, along with NHS sponsor Mr. Luke Maneth, have organized a community service day on Wednesday, April 22, 2026. This will be a full school day dedicated to giving back to our community, with participation from all GBHS students and teachers. The Board has approved participation by GBHS students and teachers in this event. This positive experience brings the community together and showcases the benefits of volunteering. Businesses interested in participating can contact Luke Maneth.

Approval of Security Camera Purchase

Park and Riley Elementary Schools are in the rotation for security camera replacements. The district has had much success with 5MP high-definition, cloud-encrypted security cameras that are customizable and expandable, and can be installed and serviced by district employees. The Board approved a Greenbush quote from CommLink IT for $126,244.08 for Verkada camera costs and required licenses. District employees will install and maintain the cameras, saving the district money.

Approval of GBMS Parking Lot Specifications

Parking lot and concrete improvements are needed at GB Middle School. Specifications have been prepared for the issuance of an RFQ to qualified, licensed concrete contractors. The Board approved releasing the specifications to solicit bids from qualified contractors. The notice will be published in the GB Tribune, and bid documents will be posted on the USD 428 website.

Approval of PreK Curriculum Pilot Materials

The PreK Curriculum Adoption Team received board approval to pilot two prospective curriculum programs, *Frog Street* and *Savvas Three Cheers* for PreK, during the Fall 2026 semester. Both curricula offer online options and assessments suitable for three and four-year-old students. The PreK adoption team will bring the results to the board for final approval in early 2027.

Approval of K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Pilot

The K-12 District Social Studies Team presented their selection for board approval to pilot two prospective curriculum programs in Fall 2026. Both McGraw-Hill and Savvas curricula offer online options and interactive content. Savvas curriculum has been in place for the past seven years and has been a good option. The adoption team will present the results to the board for final approval in early 2027.

K-8:

- McGraw-Hill Impact Social Studies, Savvas *MyWorld Interactive*

9-12:

- Imagine Learning Traverse *(all courses: World History, World Geography, US History, US Government, Economics)*
- TCI: Geography, Government, Economics
- McGraw-Hill: World History
- Savvas: US History

Kansas book will remain the same, as there are no newer versions.

First Reading 7-12 ELA Curriculum Adoption

The 7-12 ELA curriculum team presented *Savvas MyPerspectives* as its recommended adoption for the 7-12 ELA curriculum. *MyPerspectives* is a rigorous curriculum that delivers deeper knowledge that aligns with standards. The online resources are unlimited, and the 2027 version offers strong support for new teachers and Spanish speakers, building student confidence. This is a First Reading, and approval will be requested at a subsequent meeting.

Approval of Education Impact Quote

The Board approved the Educational Impact quote of $18,000 to continue providing summer professional learning opportunities for teachers. Educational Impact is a web-based service providing current, research-based professional development for all teachers, PreK-12, in all content areas.

Approval of Capturing Kids' Hearts Quote

The Board approved the renewal of the Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) Quote of $102,700 to provide training and maintain student and teacher access to content and professional development throughout the 2026-2027 school year through various visits and subscriptions. In addition to this quote, Coaching Greatness Training is included for activities sponsors and coaches, and the district will decide later whether to include this service for coaches and sponsors.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- State Assessments in USD 428

State assessments have begun with the KELPA window opening on February 2, 2026. KELPA is an English-language proficiency measure used to evaluate student progress. Other state assessment windows will open after spring break.

- Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment Information

USD 428 Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, from 5:00-7:30 pm, at Little Panthers Preschool/District Education Center. The event provides new families with information about USD 428 Preschool and Kindergarten programs. Families of current LPP students do not need to attend.

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

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- District Property and Casualty Insurance Update

In January, Mr. Popp attended the Kansas Insurance Cooperative for Schools (KICS) full membership meeting. While districts typically expect a 3-5% increase, the 2026-2027 premium is expected to be flat or only slightly higher for the 26-27 policy renewal. Mr. Popp serves as chairperson on the KICS board of trustees.

- Safety Updates

USD 428 has recently partnered with a mapping company to create a database of floor plans for the district's school buildings, which 911 and emergency responders can use when responding to school crises. Mr. Popp is submitting a ZeroEyes federal grant application to provide a software server overlay that detects threats using existing cameras that identify weapons. ZeroEyes is a Safe and Secure Firearm Detection Program that verifies threats 24/7/365 by trained US military veterans and alerts schools and law enforcement if a threat is detected. This technology adds a protective layer to the school's existing security measures and complies with privacy laws. If approved, the grant will cover initial costs for two years, with ongoing maintenance the district's responsibility.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- Legislative Update

Mr. Thexton briefly discussed current House and Senate legislative bills that, if passed, could affect public education.

- District Site Council Update

The District Site Council recently met with administrators and discussed proficiency screeners and the schedule. KELPA is the English-language proficiency measure used to evaluate student progress, and FastBridge is the KSDE-supported universal screening and progress-monitoring tool for K-12 reading, math, and social-emotional behavior, administered three times yearly.

- Approval of Grants and Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- USD 428 wishes to apply for and to accept a Kansas AG's office grant for ZeroEyes - *AI software used with cameras for gun/weapon detection.*
- The GBHS Activities Department wishes to accept the following contribution for the Winter Fundraiser.

Amount	From	For
$50	Robert L. Fuqua	Matilda Philbern Basketball
$50	Mildred Burroughs	Swim Team
$100	James and Kathy Vopat	Girls Basketball
$100	OPI. LLC	Winter fundraiser
$350	Wolfpack Printing	Reward incentives (wrestling shirts)

- $134.19 BSN Sports Reward incentives

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

School	Amount	Company
Lincoln Elementary	$ 269.63	Kroger Rewards
Riley Elementary	$ 176.12	Kroger Rewards

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: January 12, and January 28, 2026
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report *(effective 6/1/26):*
  Licensed Resignations
  - ✓ Ms. Dayton Long, teacher at Little Panthers Preschool
  - ✓ Mr. Joseph Bliven, teacher of Science at GB High School

  Licensed Retirements
  - ✓ Mr. Gary Pinkall, teacher of 7th-grade Science at GB Middle School
  - ✓ Mr. Dale Kuhlman, teacher of Physical Education at Lincoln Elementary School

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- **No School:** There will be an early dismissal on February 19, and NO SCHOOL on Friday, February 20, 2026.
- **BOE Luncheon Meeting:** Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at Park Elementary School.
- **BOE Regular Meeting:** Monday, March 9, 2026, at the District Education Center.
- **No School on** Friday, March 13, for Teacher Grading/Collaboration.
- **Spring Break:** USD 428 will observe Spring Break March 16-20, 2026.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.