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

BOARD REPORT

March 9, 2026 **5:00 p.m.**

BOARD 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
  Foundation trustees will meet on Wednesday to discuss Mini Grants. The application is open until March 23, 2026.

Recognitions / Presentations

- USD 428 Career Milestone Program
  Each year, the Board of Education formally recognizes district employees for their continued commitment to Great Bend Public Schools. Service milestones are honored in five-year increments. For the 2026 recognition cycle, 70 staff members have reached service milestones, representing a cumulative 920 years of service to the district. Staff members who have achieved 20 or more years of service have been invited to the meeting to be recognized by the Board of Education and Administration.
  **present for recognition*

20 Years	25 Years	30 Years	35 Years	40 Years
*Janet Dowson	Linda Basye	Jana Miessler	Shelly Post	Susan Stambaugh
Karen Ekberg	*Jolene Kirmer	Traci Miller		
Mary Elliott	Pamela Jordan	Shannon Wedel		
Jeremy Foster	Lisa Turner	Greg Wells		
Sarah Irwin				
Holly Oyedeji				
Ramona Perez				
*Kelsey Scheuerman				
*Cody Schmidt				

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members. Matt Westerhaus, Director of USD 428 Activities, presented a report to the board members at this meeting.

- Matt Westerhaus introduced Trenton Kern, who was recognized as the State Champion in the 215-pound weight class. Trenton plans to attend GCC on scholarship after graduation, and then transfer to FHSU to pursue a degree in agronomy.
- Six new staff members have been integrated into the music department and are making a positive impact. The new schedule has allowed for effective itinerant instruction for orchestra and band.

- Clinics & Events: GBHS Choir hosted a vocal clinic with Dr. Randall Stroope for 350 students, inviting other districts to participate. The event was successful, and the department expressed a desire to host more regional community events.
- High achievement at KMEA was noted; 6 band members and 4 choir members earned State honors.
- Ongoing partnerships with BCCC continue to benefit student participation in musicals.
- The board was informed that the current band uniforms were purchased in 2012. Ms Ellie. White is currently securing quotes for replacements and will present the findings to the board at a later meeting.
- Athletic Programs: Unified Bowling and E-Sports are successfully established and have full rosters. KSHSAA is currently discussing Boys' Volleyball and Girls' Flag Football; however, Mr. Westerhaus advised caution regarding potential declines in participation in existing sports.
- The two new golf simulators, funded by a private donor, the Panther Booster Club, and the district. The simulators help make up for the lack of access to a golf course.
- WAC Standings: The district is in contention for the WAC Championship Cup (last won in 2009) but currently ranks 5th in Sportsmanship; staff is working with students to improve this ranking.
- GBHS is classified as 4A for football and 5A for all other sports. Total enrollment stands at 878, with high participation rates in athletics (approximately 47% of boys and 49% of girls). Discussions are ongoing about expanding the WAC or exploring other conference options to improve athletic scheduling.
- Mr. Westerhaus briefly noted potential impacts of House Bill 515 (non-public student participation) and proposed changes to transfer eligibility rules.
- Strength & Conditioning Program: Coaches Beck and Schultz were commended for their impact in the weight room, and efforts are underway to accommodate 450 athletes, including plans to bring 7th- and 8th-graders to the high school facility for summer programs. Consistent, proper weight training, monitored by coaches, benefits students in athletic programs.

Second Reading 7-12 ELA Curriculum Adoption

In February, the 7-12 ELA curriculum team recommended Savvas MyPerspectives for adoption as the PreK-12 English Language Arts curriculum materials. MyPerspectives is a rigorous curriculum that provides deeper knowledge aligned with standards. At this Second Reading, the Board approved $269,554.70 for the purchase of the 7-12 ELA curriculum.

Approval to Purchase Pilot Materials - *Imagine Learning Traverse*

Mrs. Blevins discussed *Imagine Learning Traverse* for grades 9-12, and the social studies pilot will take place in fall 2026. The Board approved the purchase of the social studies pilot materials at a cost of $4,400.

Approval of Fire Panel Quotes

Fire panel systems in each school across the district are outdated and need to be replaced. Mr. Popp presented quotes from two companies that provide this service. The Board approved the lowest quote for the voiceless option from Pinnacle Fire Automation at $201,565. The voiceless option is nearly $500,000 less than the voice system; however, schools undergoing future renovations are required to upgrade to the voice system, which can be upgraded as needed.

Approval of KASB Conflict Letter and Waiver

The Barton County Special Services is requesting KASB legal support to review and update the Special Services Cooperative Agreement for member districts USD 355, 403, 431, and 428. Because a single KASB attorney would be advising all districts on the same agreement, each board must approve a Waiver of Conflict acknowledging the shared representation and that KASB cannot

withhold agreement-related information from any member district. The Board approved the waiver.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- KESA 2026 Action Plan

KESA is the state accreditation process. District leadership teams met at a KSDE School Improvement Day workshop to collaborate and share best practices for school improvement. The DLT and BLT finalized the plan, and the Board approved it. Mr. Thexton will submit the KESA plan to KSDE.

- Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment

The district's annual Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment is scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, from 5:00 to 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.

- Summer School 2026 Planning

Initial work is underway to prepare for student learning in the summer of 2026. With various construction projects planned during the summer, summer school is still being finalized, and Mrs. Blevins will update the board at a later meeting.

- Summer Professional Development

Mrs. Blevins shared the 2026 Summer Professional Learning Catalog, which includes courses available to teachers for professional development points, some of which offer college credit. The district has partnered with Education Impact and Baker University to provide a variety of online and in-person courses. In addition, Traci Miller and Stacey Magnet are both certified to teach LTRS refresher courses, and Kindric Castro will present AI courses.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: Minutes 3/3/26, Next meeting 5/5/26
  - Professional Development Council (PDC) Minutes 3/2/26. Next meeting 4/6/26

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- Safety Committee Update

The Safety Committee continues to discuss security threats. “Safety is not Convenient.” However, it is important to continue adapting our defenses as threats evolve.

  - Reunification Plan: The committee is finalizing a comprehensive plan for student-parent reunification during emergencies. Staff training is scheduled for the October staff day to cover evacuation routes, bus logistics, and communication protocols.
  - Behavioral Threat Assessment: A process for evaluating student risk remains to maintain discipline while ensuring at-risk students receive necessary mental health support.
  - ZeroEyes Grant: The committee approved the grant application for ZeroEyes AI weapon detection at the Middle School and High School. The district is currently awaiting a funding decision.

- Project Updates

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

  - GBHS HVAC Project- Main offices will relocate near the FACS hallway to allow crews to complete the work.
  - District Camera System – Park and Riley's new security cameras will be installed this summer. Park Elementary will be completed first.
  - Roofing Projects: Park, GBHS Gym, PAC/Fieldhouse connection area, will be completed during the summer months. The Fieldhouse will be closed during the project, and Park summer school will be relocated to Jefferson.
  - GBMS Parking Lot bids are due on 3/24/26. The results will be presented at the April BOE meeting.

Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- Legislative Update

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

- LETRS for Administrators

District administrators and building principals are completing LETRS training and will take the final test, with course completion noted on their administrative licenses. The training provided through KSDE enhances knowledge of reading instruction for struggling learners at any grade level.

- Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Thexton reported that the process of developing the Strategic Plan involves SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to evaluate internal and external factors. Staff feedback is closed and now open to community stakeholder groups to get another perspective on new goals.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- Reward Incentive contributions for $3611.72 have been received from Sunflower Bank for the ABC Program. This amount will be divided equally among the schools at $515.96 each.
- Reward Incentive contributions for the following schools have been received.

School	Amount	Company
GBHS Wrestling	$301.71	Avast Ye Java, LLC (coffee truck)
GB High School Athletics	$ 44.90	Ohiopyle Prints
GBHS Boys' Basketball	$ 565.20	My Team Gear
Eisenhower Elementary	$ 45.92	My Team Gear

- GBHS FFA wishes to accept a $300 contribution from High Plains Farm Credit.

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: February 9 and February 25, 2026
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:

  Licensed Resignations
  - ✓ Ms. Lauren Jordan, teacher of grade 5 at Eisenhower Elementary School
  - ✓ Ms. Zusseth Pinillo, teacher of ESOL at GB High School
  - ✓ Mr. Lucas Briseno, teacher of Grade 6 at Eisenhower Elementary School

  Licensed Appointments
  - ✓ Mrs. Denise Zink, Assistant Director of Barton County Special Services

Executive Sessions

The Board recessed into executive session to discuss employer-employee negotiations. No action was taken after the session.

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- No School on Friday, March 13, for Teacher Grading/Collaboration.
- Spring Break: USD 428 will observe Spring Break March 16-20, 2026.
- Community Service Day: March 22, 2026, all GBHS students and staff will participate.
- IBB Negotiation Meeting at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at the District Education Center.
- BOE Luncheon Meeting: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at Little Panthers Preschool.
- Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment: 5:00-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at the Little Panthers Preschool/District Education Center, located at 1809 24th Street. Current LPP students do not need to attend.
- BOE Regular Meeting: The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2026, at the District Education Center.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.