



Superintendent of Schools Report to the Board

July 27, 2026

Jernice Kerr Swift

Starlight Blue Star Awards

- **Free State High School** recently received several **Kansas City Starlight Theatre Blue Star Awards** for their production of *The Addams Family Musical*:
 - **Piper Northrop** (pictured left) - Outstanding Lighting Design
 - **Harper York** (pictured right) - Outstanding Performer in a Featured Role (for portrayal of Grandma)
 - Free State High School Orchestra - **Tier 1 Outstanding Orchestra**
- **Olivia Henning (FSHS vocal music teacher)** conducted the award-winning orchestra



LHS Hall of Honor 2026

Congratulations to this year's **Lawrence High School** Lions Alumni Association Hall of Honor class:

- Kim Murphree
- John Nalbandian
- Jim "Punkin" O'Connell
- Dr. Quentin Lamerle Rials (Class of 1995)
- G. Craig Weinaug (Class of 1970)



AVID Summer Institute

Last week, **USD 497** educators & administrators attended the 2026 AVID Summer Institute in Kansas City, MO.

- **Collaborated with educators from across the country;** strengthening instructional practices that prepare students for college, careers, & life beyond graduation

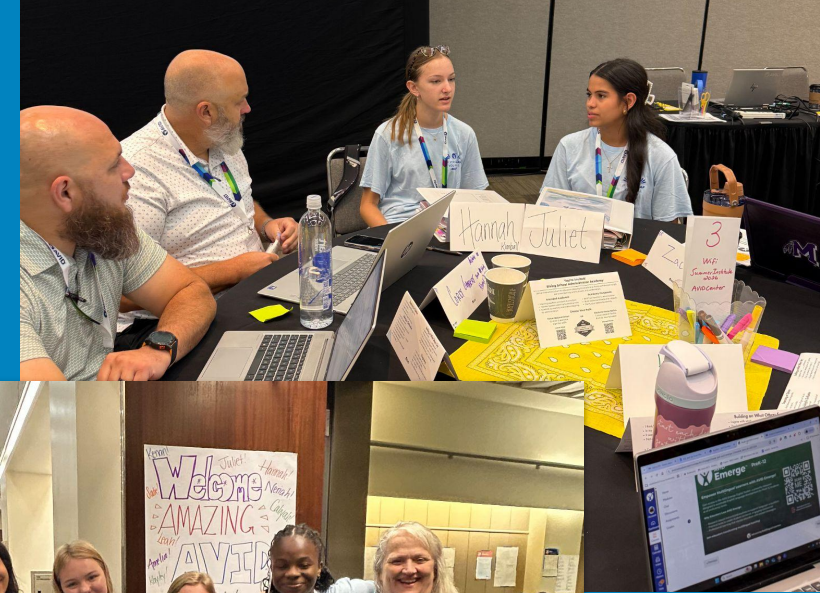


AVID Student Ambassadors



6 recent **West Middle School** graduates supported the AVID Summer Institute:

- **Amelia Abrahamson, Neriah Emmanuel-Okpara, Leah Groves, Hannah Kimball, Juliet Paez-Rincon, & Kayley Alarcon-Lopez**
- Assisted with conference activities, earning community service hours
- Special thanks to **WMS AVID teacher Kathleen Gates!**



Preparing for 2026–27:

Paraeducator Hiring Fair

- This open-house event **welcomed 32 candidates**
- Provided opportunities for principals & special education administrators to meet individually with prospective employees



Join Us!

Lawrence Public Schools
is Hiring Paraprofessionals!

JULY 23
110 McDonald Dr
Lawrence, KS 66044

- All Positions
- Starting Wage: \$20.00
- Same Day Interviews
- Benefits Packages

Have the same schedule as your child!

9AM-NOON


LAWRENCE
Public Schools
www.usd497.org

The poster features a blue background with white and orange text. It includes an illustration of two stylized figures, one orange and one white, climbing a set of white stairs. The orange figure is at the top, and the white figure is at the bottom, reaching up. The poster also features a calendar icon for July 23 and a list of benefits. The Lawrence Public Schools logo is in the bottom left corner.

Preparing for 2026–27:

Leaders Prepare for New School Year

Building leaders met for a two-day Back-to-School professional development session.

- Built on last year's focus: clarity, culture, & capacity
- This year's focus:
**In Partnership for Students,
With Intention and By Design**

Ready, Set, Lead!



Preparing for 2026–27:

Family Engagement in Education

Staff recently attended **Creating Effective Home and School Partnerships** at the Harvard Graduate School of Education:

- Five-day program led by nationally recognized faculty
- Focused on strategies to demonstrate how authentic family partnerships directly improve **student attendance, academic performance, school climate, & educational equity**



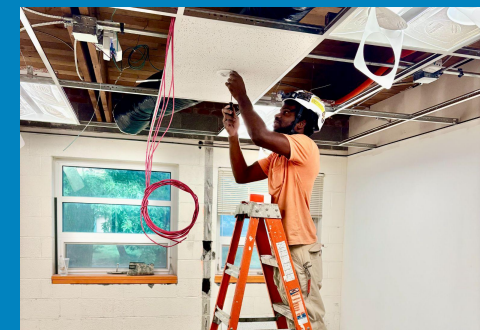
Preparing for 2026–27:

Centennial Campus Update

Renovation work continues to make steady progress at

Centennial Campus

- **Preserving & repurposing** much of the existing structure & materials
- **Reimagining the interior with flexible learning spaces** as unique as the educational pathways offered at Choice Campus



Coming Soon:

Welcoming Staff & Families



- **New Teacher Induction** — *Monday, August 3*
- **Student Teacher Orientation** — *Thursday, August 6*
- **All Staff Welcome PD** — *Friday, August 7*
- **EC–HS Certified & ESP PD** — *Monday, August 10*

- Check in at *your* school for upcoming family events:
 - **Curriculum Night**
 - **Popsicles on the Playground**
 - **Meet the Teacher Night**
 - **Open Houses / Sneak Peaks**