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

BOARD REPORT

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

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

Communications

The USD 428 Education Foundation's Annual Dinner & Auction will take place on November 12, 2026, at the Great Bend Events Center. You can purchase tickets by scanning the QR code to buy online or by contacting a trustee. The banquet will have a Red and Black Ball theme and a business-casual dress code.

Presentations

- Horizon Award Nominees

Great Bend Public Schools (USD 428) has nominated Lincoln Elementary first-grade teacher Grace Tuttle and Great Bend High School science teacher Luke Maneth for the 2027 Kansas Horizon Award, a state honor sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education for exemplary first-year educators. Both second-year teachers are commended for their classroom energy, strong student relationships, and leadership roles—including Tuttle's work on the district Science Vertical Alignment Team and Maneth's sponsorship of multiple school clubs. They will now advance to the regional selection process, and the state winners will be announced in February.

- Universal Studios Danceline Trip

Maddy Hayden Rideaux, GBHS Danceline Coach, and dancers Ailey Scothorn, Mylee Maddox, and Jimena Montes presented the Board of Education with a travel proposal and budget for the dance team's trip to perform at a Dance the Magic show at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, in mid-January 2027. They outlined the itinerary, student safety protocols, and fundraising plans to cover expenses. The Board approved the trip.

- Director's Report

Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
At this meeting, Andrea Bauer, Director of Public Relations, presented a report to the board members, briefly summarizing the district's digital presence, demonstrating it, and explaining its key features.

- Highlights include the new website, Final Site, which was selected a year ago and implemented before the beginning of the school year. Final Site offers improved navigation and a virtual chat feature for website assistance. Site analytics offer insight into website traffic trends.
- The GB 428 Mobile Application gives students, parents, and employees easy access to school information and a way to communicate in accordance with policy.

- The district's Webmaster, Dylon Paden, was hired at the start of the website project and has gotten it up and running.

Approval of Local Consolidated Plan Allocation

The 2026-2027 Local Consolidated Plan (LCP) totals $1,229,385, up from $1,227,629 the prior year. The Board approved the allocation of state and federal program funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. Programs and their allocated amounts are listed below.

Title I	Improving Education Programs	$ 893,679
Title II A	Supporting Effective Instruction	$ 121,721
Title III	English Learner and Immigrant Programs	$ 40,500
Title IVA	Grants for Student Support/Academic Enrichment	$ 51,260
Title I Part C	Migrant	$ 122,225
	Total	$1,229,385

Notification of Title VI B (3-21) and VI B (3-5) Early Childhood Flow-Through Budget Application

Public notification of the 2026-2027 Title VI B and VI B ECH budget, which covers salaries for licensed special education staff, is required. The 2026-2027 application totals $1,083,412 in Title VI B pass-through funds ($41,626 less than the 2025-2026 school year), with $42,873 for ECH ($213 less than the 2025-2026 school year). The budget application will be available for public review at the Barton County Cooperative of Special Education for the next thirty days. The Board approved the application.

Approval of GBRC Request per Kansas Statute

Pursuant to K.S.A. 12-1928 (h), the Great Bend Recreation Commission (GBRC) intends to enter into a lease-purchase agreement for development on the Stone Ridge Golf Course. Under the authority of this statute, lease agreements are subject to the approval of the certifying city or school district. The Board approved this agreement.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- Fall Professional Development

Mrs. Blevins previewed upcoming Collaboration Meetings for grade-level and department meetings. The following week, teachers will meet for collaboration on Friday and finish grading for upcoming parent-teacher conferences. The district will discuss school improvement goals throughout the year.

- At-Risk Accountability Plan Update

Mrs. Blevins updated the Board on the district's work to comply with K.S.A. 72-3574. The law requires districts to create an at-risk accountability plan, report on at-risk students' performance, demonstrate their longitudinal academic improvement, and report annually to the State Board of Education on progress under the plan. The Board will receive further updates as the process continues.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: next meeting 10/13/26 and 11/3/26
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): 9/14/26, 10/5/26 minutes, next meeting 11/2/26

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- Public School Works training

The Public School Works program automatically assigns staff annual state and federally mandated training courses through an online testing platform. Staff have completed more than 10,000 training modules on topics ranging from fire extinguisher safety to suicide prevention, and most employees consistently complete their assigned training on time.

- District Flu Vaccination Clinics

For several years, USD 428 nurses have partnered with the Barton County Health Department to hold BCHD flu vaccination clinics at each school for students and staff. Flu vaccinations will be billed through each individual's insurance provider. Mr. Popp will present the clinic statistics to the board members.

- Safety Day Exercise Review

The safety professional development exercise on 9/28/26 was a positive experience for staff. USD 428 staff and local law enforcement officers worked together to plan for emergencies. The district-wide reunification simulation drill went well, and staff shared positive feedback. The day began with guest speaker Kirk Carpenter in the GBHS auditorium, where he discussed a tragic school shooting that occurred while he was superintendent. Building employees then returned to their buildings, while staff from each building were bused to the PAC to simulate their roles in a real-life situation. Hopefully, these lessons will never be needed, but if they are, staff feel more prepared to handle the situation. Safety preparation is an ongoing initiative.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- Enrollment Numbers Update

District enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is 2,777 students, 97 fewer than at this time last year. Mr. Thexton said enrollment has declined over the past five years, a trend observed statewide. The official student count day for the 2026-2027 academic year was September 20. Mr. Thexton mentioned that RSP & Associates, a school planning company, provided an analysis. RSP provides highly accurate, data-driven enrollment projections to support effective planning strategies for declining enrollment.

- Bus Safety Week, October 19-23, 2026, "Safe Rides, Everyday Heroes"

National School Bus Safety Week promotes year-round bus safety awareness. Bus drivers submit stop-arm surveys to the state, as passing a bus with the stop arm out is illegal. Bus drivers provide excellent service to children and are valued year-round.

- Anti-Bullying Awareness Month

October is a month-long effort to prevent childhood bullying and encourage kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

- Safe Schools Week

Oct 19-23, Kansas school administrators and staff are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 500,000 elementary and secondary school students. America's Safe Schools Week is an opportunity to review or enhance your district's crisis plan.

- Personnel Report

Recruiting quality teachers for the 2026-27 school year has already started, with upcoming virtual and in-person recruiting fairs scheduled. Additionally, the BOE will consider new teachers graduating in December for positions currently held by long-term substitutes, depending on whether a permanent role is available.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- Kristy Alvord wishes to apply for a KSDE Food Service Equipment grant for up to $35,000 to purchase portable hot wells for all 5 elementary schools.
- Riley Elementary wishes to accept a $100 contribution from Sunflower Electric for its annual fundraiser.
- Great Bend High School wishes to accept the following contributions
  - $250 from AGC of Kansas, Inc., DBA Build Up Kansas for GBHS Robotics Club
  - $250 from AGC of Kansas, Inc., DBA Build Up Kansas for GBHS Woods Department
  - $2,000 from Wheatland Electric for GBHS Vo Tech/ Electric Car Program
  - $250 from Wheatland Electric for GBHS Debate Team

Financial Report

Mr. Popp presented the warrants, financial report, travel summary, energy report, unencumbered cash balance details, and health insurance status to board members.

Executive Session

The Board recessed into executive session to discuss individual employees' performance under KOMA. The Board took no action after the session.

Consent Agenda

Board members approved the following items.

- Approval of BOE Meeting Minutes: September 14, 2026, September 30, 2026
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:
  - ✓ Mrs. Rachel McCluskey, teacher of Special Education at Riley Elementary School

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- BOE Luncheon Meeting: at noon on October 28, 2026 (Riley Elementary School)
- Annual KASB Convention: on November 6-8, 2026, in Wichita, KS
- Education Foundation Annual Dinner & Auction: On November 12, 2026, tickets are available for the Red & Black Ball
- BOE Regular Meeting: The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2026, at the District Education Center.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.