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

BOARD REPORT

November 09, 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

- Board Member Comments
  Board members recently attended the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) Convention in Wichita. Mr. Emerson noted that the convention went well and is an annual opportunity for school board members across Kansas to communicate common issues and interests.
- USD 428 Education Foundation
  USD 428 Education Foundation Dinner & Auction- Thursday, November 12, 2026, Great Bend Events Center. 6:00 p.m. Social Hour, 6:30 p.m. Taste of Great Bend Dining stations. Tickets for the Red and Black Ball are available by contacting the District Education Center. The Education Foundation Trustees plan and execute this event, and USD 428 is grateful for these volunteers.

Presentations

- Kansas Teacher of the Year

  Two deserving educators from Great Bend USD 428 have been nominated for the 2027 USD 428 Teachers of the Year. Honorees Norbert Muth, an 8th-grade English teacher at Great Bend Middle School, and Natalie Deforest, a fourth-grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary School, will advance to the 2027 Kansas Teacher of the Year competition. The Kansas Teacher of the Year program recognizes outstanding teachers and highlights their work among colleagues and peers statewide. Congratulations, Mr. Muth and Mrs. Deforest!
- Director's Report

  Each month, a district director will present department updates to board members.
  Dirk Davis, Director of Maintenance and Grounds, will provide a report to board members at this meeting.
  Dirk Davis publicly recognized his staff, noting that district custodians and technicians cover 36,000 feet of district property across all 8 schools to eliminate safety hazards and maintain a safe, clean environment for students. The four technicians manage complex systems, including phone systems and all 300 district HVAC units, boilers, chillers, air handlers, fire controls, and security cameras. Mr. Davis recapped the past year's accomplishments.

• District Camera System – Park and Riley had new cameras installed this past summer, and their older cameras were repurposed at Jefferson until new ones can be purchased for Jefferson.
• Crews perform regular seasonal maintenance, including HVAC inspections, grounds upkeep, and deep cleaning of the facilities. Larger summer projects included a classroom wall modification at Eisenhower, GBHS pressbox improvements, GBHS HVAC, GBHS fire panel replacement, and new roofs at the GBHS Fieldhouse and Park Elementary.

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 will approve the budget application. The budget application was available for public review at the Barton County Cooperative of Special Education for thirty days. The Board approved the VI B and VI B ECH budget.

Out-of-State Travel Update (Danceline)

At the October Board of Education meeting, the Board approved the Dance Trip to Florida/Disney. The group has changed their travel dates to December 29 through January 2. These dates do not interfere with other activities and will ot affect school. No action is needed; this is for information only.

Approval of Community Service Day

The Board approved Wednesday, April 21, 2027, as Community Service Day, with participation by all GBHS students and teachers. Mr. Luke Maneth, the NHS Sponsor, and NHS students attended the meeting to answer questions. The GBHS NHS will fundraise for supplies and coordinate teacher and student crews to complete tasks and projects. The day will be a full school day dedicated to giving back to our community.

Approval of Computer Purchase

The district uses a rotation cycle for electronic purchases to keep technology up to date, with computers on a five-year rotation. The Board approved the following device purchases at the listed prices.

Device	Qty	Each	Total Expenditure
BCSS, Jefferson, Park Teacher Laptops	95	$1,316.38	$125,056.10
Staff Desktops	15	$1,209.38	$ 18,140.70
		Total	**$143,196.80**

Desktop Price Update: Ryan Axman, Director of IT, placed the order after the meeting and noted that, due to a price reduction, the district will pay $16,196.85 for staff desktops instead of the listed cost, a $1,943.85 reduction in the amount approved by the Board. The new amount is $141,252.95.

Enrollment Analysis

The Board of Education approved hiring RSP & Associates to conduct a comprehensive enrollment analysis to guide long-term planning amidst declining enrollment. By combining GIS mapping with local birth rates, housing development trends, and student migration data, RSP will provide a 5- to 10-year student forecast that distinguishes temporary enrollment dips from permanent demographic shifts. This objective, third-party data will allow the district to proactively align staffing and budgets with per-pupil funding, evaluate building capacities, and make informed, transparent decisions about future facility and boundary needs.

Curriculum / Instruction Report

Assistant Superintendent JoAnn Blevins

- Teacher Evaluations

Teachers are evaluated annually by school principals in accordance with state statutes, Board of Education policies, and Negotiated Agreement policies. Teachers in their first and second years are evaluated twice, once in the fall and again in the spring. Principals must complete the first-semester evaluations by November 18.

- At-Risk Accountability Plan Update

Mrs. Blevins updated the Board on the district's efforts to comply with K.S.A. 72-3574, which requires districts to develop an at-risk accountability plan, demonstrate longitudinal academic improvement, and report annually to the State Board of Education. The plan focuses on an identified cohort of 18 fourth-grade students in the English Language Arts (ELA) subgroup and sets measurable goals using KSDE-approved interventions and evidence-based practices to close the proficiency gap. Annual progress and expenditure reports will be posted on the district website to ensure transparency, and the Board will receive additional updates as the process continues.

- Astra Assessment & IADA Pilot Update

Under the federal Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) pilot, the district has shifted from a single end-of-year exam to the Astra Assessment, using short quarterly check-ins to provide teachers with rapid feedback and early readiness indicators. Quarter 1 results show that 28% of students district-wide are on track for end-of-year proficiency in ELA and 37% in Math, while 40% (718 students) are "on the bubble," just a few points below proficiency. Moving forward, teachers are using Astra's granular skill reports to deliver targeted, small-group interventions for these near-proficient learners, with student growth scheduled to be reassessed quarterly.

- Curriculum Meetings
  - Curriculum Steering Committee: Minutes 10/13/26 and 11/3/26. Next meeting 12/8/26
  - Professional Development Council (PDC): 11/2/26 minutes, next meeting 12/7/26

Business and Operations Report

Assistant Superintendent John Popp

- District Site Council Update

The District Site Council is composed of several community members who meet for one hour, up to four times annually, to discuss current topics related to USD 428 Great Bend Schools. Mr. Popp updated the Board on the most recent meeting, which focused on school security measures.

- State of the District

Mr. Popp reviewed district enrollment trends and financial projections, noting that elementary enrollment has declined significantly over the past decade. Because state and federal funding is largely tied to per-pupil counts, this sustained drop in student population poses substantial long-term financial challenges for

the district. To proactively address the anticipated budget impact, the administration will review all operational areas for potential cost reductions and consider implementing a hiring freeze, under which vacated positions resulting from resignations may not be refilled and job duties would instead be reassigned to existing staff. Additionally, Mr. Popp will visit each elementary school in the district to gather direct input and cost-saving ideas from building staff.

- Project Updates

Board members and the administration discussed updates on the following projects.

- Camera projects at Jefferson, Lincoln, and Eisenhower Elementary Schools
- GBHS Concrete Fire Lane
- GBHS Rooftop HVAC (10 remaining)
- Delay Projects:
  - Roofing at Riley and GBHS Fieldhouse
  - GBHS Parking Lot

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Khris Thexton

- Election Update

Although Republicans and Democrats hold differing priorities on special education funding targets, property tax relief, and private school choice programs, a more closely divided Kansas House increases the need for bipartisan compromise, which could reshape per-pupil base aid and student funding weightings in the new finance formula.

- School Finance Update

Per-pupil base aid is the statutory foundation amount for each student, while student funding weightings are enrollment multipliers that provide additional funding for higher-cost needs, such as at-risk, bilingual, special education, or low-enrollment. Once a district's foundation aid is calculated from its BASE and weighted enrollment, equalization provides state aid to districts with lower local property values per student, helping them maintain comparable funding.

- Non-Resident Enrollment Update
  - 2027-2028 Open enrollment 1/1/27 – 6/15/27

Mr. Thexton discussed nonresident enrollments and the state-level policy that allows students to select and transfer to a district of their choice rather than attend the district based on their residence. Enrollment numbers help determine practical classroom capacities, and out-of-district applications must be submitted by June 15. Elementary placement is determined by the number of students at each school, which determines where nonresident students will be assigned. USD 428 currently has 127 students enrolled who do not live in the district.

- Virtual School Update

Great Bend High School's virtual program, in partnership with ESSDACK Learning Center, offers an alternative pathway for credit recovery and graduation upon completing 25 semester credits (7 semesters). USD 428 receives 60% of the FTE funding, while ESSDACK receives 40% for each student in the program. The program currently has 41 students. Virtual students must reside within USD 428 district boundaries to be considered.

- Approval of Contributions

The BOE approved the grants and contributions noted below.

- Eisenhower teachers Caitlyn Thompson and Jena Lynn each would like to apply for and accept a $1,000 grant contribution from Credit Union.
- Great Bend High School Activities Department wishes to accept a $590.20 contribution from Triple B Holdings for softball practice nets.

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

School	Amount	Company
GBHS Danceline	$ 111.00	BSN Sports
GBHS Football	$ 30.00	BSN Sports
GBHS Football	$ 159.00	BSN Sports
GBHS Girls Golf	$ 75.00	BSN Sports
GBHS Activities	$ 8.20	Playon Sports (Q4 subscription revenue)

- The GBHS Vocal Music Department wishes to accept a contribution of $1,500 from the USD 428 Education Foundation. This contribution goes toward hosting a guest clinician for the Choral Collective, USD 428 choir programs, and other area choir programs.

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: September 14, 2026, September 30, 2026
- Bills and Financial Reports: As presented.
- Personnel Report:
  Licensed Resignation
  - ✓ Mrs. Kristi Mason, teacher of Science at Great Bend High School

  Licensed Retirement
  - ✓ Ms. Beth Rein, teacher of Algebra at Great Bend Middle School

Upcoming Events

Board members were reminded of the forthcoming events.

- USD 428 Education Foundation Annual Dinner & Auction: Red & Black Ball on November 12, 2026. Tickets are available.
- BOE Luncheon Meeting: at noon on November 18, 2026 (Eisenhower Elementary School)
- Thanksgiving Recess- No School- November 23-27, 2026
- BOE Regular Meeting: The next BOE regular monthly meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2026, at the District Education Center.

Adjournment

The Board of Education meeting was adjourned.