



Kansas State Board of Education  
Tuesday, November 12 , 2024

### Call to Order

Chair Melanie Haas called the meeting of the Kansas State Board of Education to order at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 12, 2024, in the boardroom of the Landon State Office Building, 900 SW Jackson St., Topeka, Kansas.

### Roll Call

The following Board members were present:

Mrs. Betty Arnold  
Mrs. Michelle Dombrosky  
Mrs. Melanie Haas, Chair  
Mr. Dennis Hershberger  
Mrs. Cathy Hopkins  
Dr. Deena Horst  
Mrs. Ann Mah  
Mr. Jim McNiece  
Mr. Jim Porter, Vice Chair  
Mr. Danny Zeck

The Board attorney, Mr. Mark Ferguson and Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson were in attendance at the Board table.

### Kansas State Board mission statement, Kansans Can Vision statement, moment of silence, Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Haas read both the Board's mission statement and Kansans Can Vision statement. She asked for a moment of silence after which all stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Approval of the Agenda

Chair Haas asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda for both Tuesday and Wednesday. Mrs. Dombrosky requested items c. and d. be taken off the consent agenda for a separate vote.

Mrs. Hopkins moved to approve the agenda for Tuesday and Wednesday as amended. Mr. McNiece seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

### Approval of the October 8 & 9, 2024 minutes

Chair Haas asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 8 & 9 , 2024.

Start  
00:01:00  
(Time  
stamps  
correlate to  
KSDE  
Livestream  
YouTube)

Agenda

7:11  
Motion on  
Agenda

Mrs. Hopkins moved to accept the minutes of October 8 & 9, 2024 as written. Dr. Horst seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

7:35  
Motion  
minutes

### Commissioner's Report

Dr. Watson gave a report about change. Changing of the season, changing of policy, changing of board members, the story of changing childhood (photo of a child in kindergarten wearing a Pittsburg State t-shirt and then a photo of that same student in his first year at Pittsburg State as a freshman), and change in draft/volunteer numbers over the past 100 years. He referenced the process of trying to access military data as post-secondary success for Kansas students. Dr. Watson shared the advisory councils that he has set up. There is a teacher advisory council, parent advisory, and now he is proposing regional student advisory councils (5 or 6), totally in 25 students from high schools across Kansas. The student advisory council will be in person and meet twice a year. Dr. Watson finished his report with a series of song writers, among them were Billy Joel (Allentown), Simon and Garfunkel (A Small Town).

7:45  
Dr. Watson

### Citizen's Forum

Chair Haas opened the Citizen's Forum at 10:40. There were four citizens who wanted to speak to the Board.

44:50  
Citizen's  
Forum

Lisa Huesers had some comments about the Student Screen Time Task Force. She stated there was too much focus on personal devices and not enough on the amount of screen time being forced on students by school districts via district issue devices. She submitted a document and asked to have it included in the minutes. The body of the letter was:

"It appears the board hastily assembled a task force and rushed through meetings to address student "screen time." Looking at the report issued, it is concluded that the overwhelming amount of screen time being forced on students by school districts via district issued one-to-one devices was virtually not addressed. Also, the theft of individual student personal intellectual property was not addressed at all. Considering the available information regarding technology's impact on academics, privacy, brain development, private property rights, etc., the research tapped by the task force and documented in the report is notably insufficient. Of the resulting 22 recommendations of the task force, over half- yes, over half- landed in the category deemed "parental oversight" of district-owned devices (13 out of 22). Another just under 25% of recommendations focused on "personal devices" parents have given their children (5

out of 22). Recommendations in both of these areas could arguably be interpreted as infringing on parent rights and attempting to narrowly define and limit parents' authority in regard to their child. And the fewest number of recommendations (4 out of 22) barely addressed school issued one-to-one devices, with only one suggesting students have "regular breaks" from screens during the school day. In conclusion, the state department of education task force, appears to have conducted a very limited and inadequate review of the impact of all the technology on academic education and the life, liberty, and property rights of students as a result of all the technology that school districts have intentionally grown in and outside classrooms across the state.

These recommendations appear to be yet another veiled attack on parents' rights. Parent provided "personal devices" have been singled out and all the school district technology virtually ignored.

The number one job of those elected to office is to secure the individual's unalienable rights of life, liberty and happiness/property by upholding and defending the Constitution that protects those rights. Parents hold unalienable rights regarding their child. Parents hold the inherent authority to direct the education of their child. The state board should not support or act in any capacity that infringes parent rights regarding their child."

Steve Roberts, Overland Park, former member of the board, asked to be on the agenda for December and January, for 15 minutes at each meeting. He would like to speak about a broad range of topics.

Shane Kirschner, McPherson, Chair of teacher ed program, representing private colleges of education, addressing the Blueprint for Literacy. He stated that the private colleges are doing their best to do what they can to join in this effort.

Miranda Miller-Klugesherz , Kansas Food Action Network, asked that the Board support the Farm to Plate movement in their legislative priorities.

The forum was closed at 10:51 a.m.

### **Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time Final Report**

**Dr. Jake Steel, Co-Chairs Student Ava Gustin and Principal Brian Houghton**

Dr. Jake Steel introduced the history of the task force and the Co-Chairs, Student Ava Gustin and Principal Brian Houghton.

1:07:30  
Task Force

The Co-Chairs went over the background and development of the task force and the three focus items: 1) Use of Personal Devices in School, 2) Screen Time and Mental Health and 3) Parental Oversight of District Owned Devices. There was a process of finding geographically diverse members who represented: parents, students, teachers, principals, superintendents and IT experts. They described the process of having presentations on each topic, breakout groups, and research. The Anxious Generation, by Jonathan Haidt, was used as the base for conversation on technology in schools. They described the process for having motions and discussions. The report is separated by topic and added appendix on minority statements, research and membership.

The recommendations are as follows:

### **Personal Devices in School**

1. The task force recommends district implement a bell-to-bell personal electronic device policy in K-12 schools.
2. The task force recommends districts implement a policy for K-12 students to store personal electronic devices in a secure location inaccessible to them during the school day.
3. The task force recommends districts develop robust safety and emergency procedures that are not dependent on students contacting authorities or family via personal electronic devices or school-issued devices.
4. The task force recommends districts develop a process for teachers to report gaps in district-provided technology, so teachers do not supplement lack of or insufficient district-issued technology with use of personal devices.
5. The task force recommends districts create a personal device policy for staff members.

### **Screen Time and Mental Health**

1. The task force recommends districts provide digital citizenship education from non-technology industry resources, which incorporate unbiased or independently funded research.
2. The task force recommends districts share peer reviewed research and discuss mental health concerns associated with excessive use of social media, gaming, platforms, and instant messaging with students, families, and district staff.

3. The task force recommends districts develop a robust website and/or other means of communication with parents, students, and the community that is not reliant upon social media.
4. The task force recommends educators have students take regular breaks from screens throughout the school.

### **Parental Oversight of District-Owned Devices**

1. The task force recommends districts utilize content management tools in such a way the default settings protect students without any parental supervision being necessary.
2. The task force recommends district acceptable use policies be written in age-appropriate language for all grades.
3. The task force recommends districts provide families with clear instructions and access to report problems with district-owned devices or content to the appropriate district staff.
4. The task force recommends districts host educational opportunities for families on district-owned devices and related software.
5. The task force recommends districts share information on parental controls that can be implemented on students' personal devices.
6. The task force recommends districts emphasize the importance of maintaining a balance between digital and non-digital learning experiences, and not rely solely on technology-based instruction.
7. The task force recommends districts develop policies that allow families to opt-out of district-owned devices being sent home.
8. The task force recommends districts utilize device management systems that allow parental controls to be put in place on district-owned devices.
9. The task force recommends districts allow families to set stricter controls, if desired, on their student's district-owned device.
10. The task force recommends districts allow families oversight of what their student accesses on district-owned devices and for how long.
11. The task force recommends districts ensure families have full access to their student's district-owned device when it is at home.
12. The task force recommends districts utilize device management systems that allow families to access a mirrored version of the student's view on the district-owned device.
13. The task force recommends districts develop systems for families to manage and request additional blocked websites on district-owned devices.

The Board will take action in December on the report. Dr. Watson noted that each district has control over its own schools and this report could serve as information and guidance from the State Board to the local boards.

#### Kansas Music Educators Association

Jamie Minneman, President Mark Gard, Vice President

Damian Johnson, President-Elect Craig Manteuffel, Executive Director

CTE Committee: Martha Gabel, Olathe Fine Arts Coordinator

Chris Reynolds, Topeka Fine Arts Coordinator

Bill Thomas, Shawnee Mission Fine Arts Coordinator

The Kansas Music Educators Association (KMEA) serves approximately 2,000 music educators and their students. They are the 10<sup>th</sup> largest association in the U.S. They hold a statewide In-Service Workshop, this past year in February, where there were 10,000 attendees, 1,500 registrants, and 43 performing groups (as well as many clinics, exhibitors and other all-state ensembles). They work to make sure all students have access to quality music education. KMEA works to recruit and retain teachers. They shared that the holy trinity of music and life is balance, blend and harmony. Skills in music have a positive economic impact on the Kansas Economy.

Prior to, and after the presentation from KMEA the Board was serenaded by an excellent Topeka High string ensemble: The Larry Harris String Quintet with Mr. McCreedy as director (although the ensemble is student-directed).

3:30  
KMEA and  
Quintet

#### Blueprint for Literacy Committee update

Dr. Ben Proctor, Deputy Commissioner, KSDE

Shane Carter, Director, Teacher Licensure, KSDE

Dr. Laurie Curtis, Dyslexia Coordinator, KSDE

Dr. Proctor introduced the presentation, noting there will be a review of the accreditation system in the context of literacy, licensure requirements for literacy training, dyslexia supports and professional development for teachers.

The commitment of the State Board to Structured Literacy was stated in February 2024 as:

*The Kansas State Board of Education requires all accredited schools in Kansas to use evidence-based methodology fully aligned with the science of reading, specifically structured literacy, to provide literacy instruction for students.*

4:04:44  
Blueprint

*The State Board of Education prohibits the use of practices and pedagogy identified in research to be counterproductive to reading acquisition and achievement. In addition, the State Board recommends literacy specific universal screening measures, diagnostics, formative and summative assessments to be used in accredited schools and school districts.*

The requirements for licensure starting in July of 2028 for elementary educators will be that they must demonstrate knowledge of the science reading to renew their professional teaching license.

Dr. Curtis stated she likes the school improvement model for literacy and dyslexia issues because the teachers see themselves in the process and get excited about the changes. Dr. Curtis went through the different dyslexia supports, starting with the state Dyslexia Handbook, which all teachers have access to. There are universal screeners for students, K-8 students are screened three times per year, ninth grade students are screened in fall and have the option to exit screening. For those who screen at some risk or high risk, diagnostic assessments are provided and intervention started with progress monitoring. She explained the dyslexia training modules.

Dr. Proctor reported on LETRS® participation. 2,858 educators have completed training (volumes 1 and 2) since the beginning of the program with Lexia in 2021. 7,802 are currently enrolled. There have been 376 educators who have completed LETRS® for early childhood training and 550 others are currently enrolled. 8 administrators have completed LETRS® and 547 are currently enrolled.

- As LETRS® training moves forward, KSDE needs to:
- Continue funding LETRS® for educators through January 2026.
- Funding LETRS® Local Facilitator Training for select educators.
- Holding monthly virtual meetings on relevant literacy topics.
- Create an annual KSDE Literacy Summit to bring the Cadre members together for shared professional learning and state-wide planning.
- Begin holding ongoing Literacy Cadre zoom sessions in January.
- Continue the quarterly Literacy Advisory Council zoom sessions.
- Track data and progress towards educators receiving the Seal of Literacy.
- Provide ongoing supports for school system KESA action plans, as we work to prioritize the implementation of structured literacy.
- Utilize the “Literacy Lifeline” feedback system.
- Engage in the KBOR Blueprint for Literacy Advisory Council.

**Act on Professional Practices Commission recommendations**

**Scott Gordon, General Counsel, KSDE**

The cases shared with the board were all by default. Mr. Gordon shared the cases and stood for questions.

4:39:18  
PPC

Dr. Horst moved that the Kansas State Board of Education denies or revokes the following licenses as described in the proposed orders for 24-PPC-07; 24-PPC-08; 24-PPC-09; 24-PPC-10; 24-PPC-13; 24-PPC-14; 24-PPC-18; and suspend the Licensee in case 24-PPC-21 until the end of the day May 31, 2025. Mrs. Hopkins seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Motion

**Blueprint for Literacy Committee update SB 438**

**Dr. Cynthia Lane, Blueprint for Literacy leader, KBOR**

**Shane Carter, Director, Teacher Licensure, KSDE**

The *Blueprint for Literacy* is the higher education part of the work of teaching the science of reading and structured literacy. Dr. Lane is working with the Regents colleges and private/independent colleges that train teachers, to teach the teachers about the concepts and application of the KSDE initiative to change the way students learn to read. This process of collaborating between the higher education preparing the teachers who will teach in the K12 schools. She explained what these “micro credentials” consist of. These courses are being developed and will be shared with the State Board next month. The *Blueprint* will pay for Kansas teachers to take these courses. There will be a market rate across all the institutions, but no teacher will need to pay for the course. This is in response to the requirement in statute.

4:52:00  
Dr. Lane

**Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) Annual Report**

**Bill Faflick, Executive Director**

Mr. Faflick gave a comprehensive report about the activities over the past year for the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA). The statewide organization focused on: student/staff health and safety, championship experience, interscholastic activities – teachable moments, sportsmanship, implementation of rules, and officials and coaches. He shared the fall championship schedule:

5:32:44  
KSHSAA

- *October 18-19 – Girls Tennis*
- *October 21-22 – Girls Golf*
- *October 26 – Gymnastics*
- *November 1-2 – Volleyball (new format for 3-1A qualifying)*

- *November 2 – Cross Country*
- *November 9 – Boys Soccer (new format)*
- November 19 – Unified Bowling
- November 22 – Dance Showcase
- November 23 – Cheer Showcase
- November 29-30 – Football (new format)

The Board was very appreciative of the incredible depth and breadth of the KSHSAA impact on Kansas students. Jim Porter and Michelle Dombrosky currently serve on the KSHSAA board, and Dr. Deena Horst, who is retiring this year, has spent many years in service of KSHSAA.

## Standards Alignment Toolkit: Professional Learning and Technical Assistance Opportunities

Beth Fultz, Director, Standards and Assessments

Jennifer Hamlet, Math

Stephanie Alderman-Older, Science

Nathan McAllister, Humanities

Dr. Laurie Curtis, ELA

Mrs. Fultz introduced the program managers and the concept of a standards alignment toolkit which is shared with teachers. The program managers each shared their background in education. The technical assistance will be shared in partnership with the service centers around the state: Sublette, Hays, Salina, Hutchinson, Clearwater, Lawrence and Girard.

Each program manager shared who is on their team, and how they have developed the standards tool kit from their area.

Jennifer Hamlet, Math

Stephanie Alderman-Older, Science

Nathan McAllister, History, Geography, Social Studies

Dr. Laurie Curtis, English Language Arts/English Learners Team

## Evaluation Review Committee (ERC) recommendations on higher ed program

Dr. Catherine Chmidling, Teacher Licensure

6:16:33  
Standards

7:00:45  
ERC

Dr. Chmidling went through each College or University program recommendations.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education accept the recommendations of the Evaluation Review Committee for educator preparation program approvals for Baker University, Bethel College, Fort Hays State University, Friends University, MidAmerica Nazarene University, Pittsburg State University, Tabor College, University of Saint Mary, Washburn University, and Wichita State University. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

Motion

**TUES Item 15: Appoint two superintendents to serve as members of the Education Funding Task Force**

7:08:50

**Dr. Frank Harwood, Deputy Superintendent, KSDE**

Appoint

Mr. Hershberger moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Jim Howard as the rural superintendent. Mrs. Hopkins seconded the motion. Motion failed. 4-5 with 1 voting present. Mrs. Mah, Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Horst, Mr. Porter, and Mr. McNiece voted no. Chair Haas voted present not voting.

Motions

Jim Porter moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Brad Neusenwander as the rural superintendent. Dr. Horst seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-4. Mrs. Hopkins, Mrs. Dombrosky, Mr. Hershberger and Mr. Zeck voted no.

Jim Porter moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Corey Gibson as the urban superintendent to serve on the education funding task force. Dr. Horst seconded. Motion carried 9-1. Mrs. Arnold voted no.

Moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Jim Porter as the State Board representative to the education funding task force. Mrs. Dombrosky seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-1. Mr. Porter voted present not voting.

**School Improvement KESA update.**

**Dr. Jay Scott, Director, Accreditation and Design**

KESA 2.0 by the numbers:

1: School system activates the District Leadership Team (DLT) and Building Leadership Team(s) (BLT) for KESA 2.0 collaboration.

2: DLT meets with the KESA regional executive for check-ins for the school improvement day.

3: DLT participates in the school improvement day with like-systems and KESA facilitators.

By the numbers for this year:

7:28:25

KESA

146 KESA Check-ins  
25 School Improvement Days  
125 Facilitators trained and assigned  
90 applications for the AAC (now fully staffed, 40 members)  
18 ARC members (fully staffed)

Dr. Scott reported that the reactions from schools are positive, but some are concerned about KESA outcome standards. They are appreciative for the collaboration, clear expectations and appreciation for the in-person support.

For this year there will be an evaluation of compliance and evaluation of the action plan. Outcomes will have a report. A compliance report will be ready in July 2025 for the Board to review. Currently each compliance area is being reviewed internally.

#### **TUES Item 17: Executive Session (three motions)**

Mr. Hershberger moved that the Kansas State Board of Education recess into Executive Session to discuss the subject of employee performance, which is justified pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception and for the purposes of consultation with an attorney which would be deemed privileged in the attorney-client relationships which are both protected under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to protect the privacy interest of the individuals to be discussed. This session will begin at 5:55 for 10 minutes; no action will be taken during this session; and the open meeting will resume in the Board Room at 6:05. Dr. Watson and Board Attorney Mark Ferguson are invited to join this Executive Session. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

Mr. Hershberger moved that the Kansas State Board of Education recess into Executive Session to discuss the subject of employee performance, which is justified pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to protect the privacy interest of the individuals to be discussed. This session will begin after the first executive session for 20 minutes; no action will be taken during this session; and the open meeting will resume in the Board Room when done. No one is invited to join this Executive Session. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

Mr. Hershberger moved that the Kansas State Board of Education recess into Executive Session to discuss the subject of employee performance, which is justified pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act, in order to protect the privacy interest of the individuals to be discussed. This session will begin after the first executive session for 10 more minutes; no action will be taken during this session; and the open meeting will resume in the Board Room

Private  
Not on  
Livestream

when done. No one is invited to join this Executive Session. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

After the executive session, Chair Haas adjourned the meeting.



Kansas State Board of Education  
Wednesday, November 13 , 2024

Chair Haas called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. All members were present.

**Receive item on USD 468 consideration for accreditation**

**Dr. Frank Harwood, Deputy Commissioner, KSDE**

In reference to the low enrollment (less than 10) at Healy, USD 468, Dr. Harwood offered the following recommendations to the Board:

- Recommend personnel or resources be reassigned or reallocated within the public education system by the governing body;
- A recommendation that a state technical assistance team be assigned to assist the education system until it achieves an upgraded accreditation rating;
- A recommendation that the legislature approve a reduction in state funding in an amount that will be added to the local property tax imposed;
- A recommendation that the legislature abolish or restructure the public education system; or
- A letter of notification and a press release announcing the public education system's accreditation rating and specify the reasons for such rating.

He noted that there is not a lot the State Board can do about disorganization. On November 5, 2024, the voters of USD 468 passed a proposition (96 yes 43 No) to disorganize and attach the district to USD 466 Scott County. USD 466 Scott County has 30 days to consider the proposition. Action taken by the State Board in December will depend on the action taken by the USD 466 local board.

**School district organization study and impacts of non-resident enrollment/open enrollment**

**Gabrielle Hull, legislative coordinator, KSDE**

**Dr. Harwood, Deputy Commissioner**

Mrs. Hull gave the history of how school districts were established.

(much of the language below is directly from the presentation's PowerPoint)

- Original 1861 State Constitution noted the responsibility of the state to provide a uniform system of common schools of higher grades
- First State Board of Education established in 1873

4:10  
USD 468

15:10  
History of  
school  
districts

- Consisted of the State Superintendent and four state college/university presidents
- Did not have policy making authority
- Purpose was to certify teachers and administer teaching exams.

State began to discuss standardizing education in late 1890s, but governance was generally overseen by local boards and administrators until the 1900s.

Consisted of one- and two-room schoolhouses

Only a small portion of students expected to participate in or complete secondary education

### **Pre-Unification (1900s – 1960s)**

- The State Department of Education was established in 1915, but was restructured to resemble the current agency in 1945
  - Specialists in curriculum were added by the Department in the 1950s to provide teachers with instructional guidance
- Around 2,500 school districts remained in the 1950s
- A study was conducted in 1957 regarding the education system, which led to restructuring.
  - Separated the responsibility off the State board of Education and the State Superintendent
  - Established degree standards for Kansas teachers
  - A constitutional amendment provided for an elected State Board of Education with jurisdiction over elementary, secondary, and vocational education, as well as junior colleges
  - Granted the authority for the State Board of Education to appoint the State Commissioner of Education

### **Unification 1963**

- Consolidation legislation divided the state into 106 planning units
  - One planning unit per county, except Johnson County with two units
- Units were charged with forming one or more school districts per county, each of which must meet one of two requirements:
  - An enrollment of at least 400 students in grades 1 through 12; or
  - At least 200 square miles and an assessed valuation of at least \$2.0 million
- A statewide vote initially approved a recommendation for 311 unified school districts.

### **Post Unification Consolidation**

- The Kansas Legislature passed 1999 SB 171, which required a study of school district organization
- Study aimed to analyze efficiency of Kansas school districts and make recommendations on potential reorganization approaches
- Identified school districts that were too small or too large, and districts that had spending higher than expected based on student outcomes.

## **Augenblick & Meyers – 2002**

- Commissioned by the 1999 Legislature, Report issued in 2002
- Recommendations for school districts to consolidate or disorganize, and revisions to statute.
- Recommended the State Board consider boundary changes through:
  - Emergency dissolution
    - Districts with less than 80 students in 2000, or less than 100 students in 2001, and declining enrollment.
  - Required boundary change planning
    - Combination of low student performance and high per pupil spending (28 districts)
    - 3 years to improve - If they did not, they were to follow the emergency dissolution process.
  - Review of boundary options for all districts identified as 'target' districts in the report
- Recommended the Legislature eliminate financial disincentives to consolidation

## **Incentives to Consolidate**

- Also included in 1999 SB 171 (KSA 72-6445) was a process to hold school budgets harmless for two years if they voluntarily consolidated.
  - This bill also allowed for non-contiguous consolidation
- Currently, this hold harmless provision extends from two to four years depending on the size of the school districts involved (transferred to KSA 72-5141).
- The Legislature proposed an amendment in 2017 that would have been a financial incentive to provide higher state foundation aid for six years after consolidation.
  - This amendment did not pass.
- At the time of the Augenblick & Meyers study, there were 304 school districts.
- Over the next 10 years, 15 more school districts consolidated, or disorganized.
- In 2010, the Legislative Division of Post Audit revisited the topic of School district organization, and related cost savings
  - Audit entitled "K-12 Education: Reviewing the Potential Cost Savings from Reorganization of Kansas School Districts"
  - Only analyzed potential cost savings, while Augenblick and Meyers also analyzed student outcomes

## **Legislative Post Audit – 2010**

- Two sets of criteria were developed to identify potential districts for consolidation for cost-savings
  - First scenario attempted to consolidate school districts that did not meet original unification requirements
    - 32 districts at the time of the audit
  - Second scenario attempted to consolidate any school district that had less than 1,600 students

- The amount districts needed to spend per student decreased as their size increased, until they reached 1,500 – 2,000 students.
- Identified 242 districts that could be consolidated down to 100, leaving a total 152 districts.
- Under both scenarios, the state's cost would decrease significantly, primarily due to the decrease in the low enrollment weighting.
- An additional finding that the state could be more aggressive with financial incentives to voluntarily consolidate. However, those incentives would increase costs.
- Finally, the audit recommended amending statute (KSA 72-13,101) related to district interlocal agreements to limit the number of years districts can share entire grades
  - Alternatively recommended eliminating the provision entirely
- Since the Legislative Post Audit was released in 2010, there have been seven additional disorganizations or consolidations.
  - 328 (Lorraine) and 354 (Claflin) consolidated to form 112 (Central Plains)
  - 441 (Sabetha) and 488 (Axtel) consolidated to form 113 (Prairie Hills)
  - 406 (Wathena) and 486 (Elwood) consolidated to create 114 (Riverside)
  - 213 (West Solomon) disorganized and combined with 211 (Norton)
  - 442 (Nemaha Valley) and 451 (B&B) consolidated to form 115 (Nemaha Central)
  - 228 (Hanston) disorganized and transferred territory to 227 (Jetmore)
  - 424 (Mullinville) disorganized and transferred territory to 422 (Kiowa County)
- No additional districts have consolidated or disorganized since school year 2010-2011.

Mrs. Hull then passed out information on the count of each State Board District enrollments. The enrollment trend is slightly increased.

### **Impact of Open Enrollment**

- 24,250 K-12 students attended a non-resident school district in 24-26, not including virtual students.
- Decrease of 224 students compared to 23-24
- 1519 non-resident students (6%) participated in open enrollment.

There was a conversation about the conservative approach of school districts/local boards, to accept more non-resident students (especially elementary school) because those students will have the right to stay in the district through middle and high school.

There is a large range of enrollment from the largest district to 43,000 to the smallest 10 students (1547 average). More than half Kansas districts are considered low enrollment.

The largest 50 districts educate 73% of students and the smallest 50 educate 12% of students.

Dr. Harwood noted that individual building closings and boundary changes are difficult to talk about. Dr. Watson added that looking at the 27 school districts that currently do not meet the original 1960s unification requirements, but looking at the map, it is not Western Kansas, but it is spread across Central and Eastern Kansas. 10 school districts have less than or equal to 100 students. 32 school districts have less than or equal to 200 students.

### What's Next

- School district organization has been studied and discussed a great deal for more than 100 years, but little has changed in the last 50 years about the process to disorganize or consolidate.
- The state board could consider changes to regulation aimed at addressing district size and organization as part of accreditation.
- The legislature could consider changes to the current funding formula aimed at addressing district size and organization including incentives for consolidation.

Dr. Harwood explained that the “lever” the Board has access to is accreditation. The Board could consider district size and organization as part of accreditation.

Dr. Watson added that the birthrate is lowering nationwide, this trend is going to continue. Enrollment will become lower. When there are 100 and less students, the stability is challenged. Small changes can change the dynamics of a school. Conversations need to be had to prepare for possible events (families move out of the community, business changes, staff leaves) that will challenge the ability of the small school to operate.

Dr. Harwood shared that he supports small schools. He graduated from a small high school in Kansas. The issues are not about closing small schools. Communities that have small enrollment need to start having conversations about what they want to do, and what support they need. (LISTEN)

### Legislative Priorities 2025 (Receive Item)

Dr. Harwood, Deputy Commissioner

Dr. Harwood led the Board through a list of Legislative Priorities. This is a receive item and will be voted on next month. The list below is based on the 2024 priorities with new items in yellow.

1:16:30  
Legislative  
Priorities

## Academic Supports

- The goal of moving toward providing the first 12 postsecondary credit hours, tuition-free, during high school.
- The concept of public-private partnerships with business and industry to allow for internships, mentorships, and other opportunities.
- The legislation which requires that the State Board of Education, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the Legislature work together to monitor the success of the Foster Child Report Card. (CAN BE DROPPED because it is in statute)
- Reduced waiting time after retirement to return to teaching and **reduce** or eliminate the financial penalty.
- **The goal to move Kansas school employees currently on KPERS 3 to KPERS 2.**
- **Support additional funding to expand and enhance the current state assessment program and ensure adequate test security aligned with best practices.**

## Health and Safety

- The legislative recommendations of the school Bus Stop Arm Violation Committee.
- The efforts to reduce human trafficking in Kansas.
- The ongoing work and recommendations of the School Mental Health Advisory Council, including, but not limited to, bullying prevention; efforts for suicide prevention and awareness; and child abuse and neglect program.
- **Support expansion of the Farm to Plate initiative to support student and family access to healthy foods in local communities.**
- **Support a study of the funding necessary to fully implement the Safe and Secure Schools grant program, including necessary staff.**

## Funding

- Only using public education funds for public schools.
- Following state statute and moving towards funding 92% of the excess cost of special education.
- Continued coordination and investment in career and technical education programs that are aligned with workforce needs.
- Opportunities to expand and fund early childhood and kindergarten readiness.
- Funding transportation for all students in all unsafe situations, regardless of mileage.
- Support training in the Science of Reading training when ESSER funding ends, including continued funding for the Dyslexia Coordinator position.
- Continued funding for the teacher apprenticeship program.
- Increased state support on bond and interest.
- **Support universal free meals for Kansas public school students.**
- **Recommend financial support for school districts to enhance and improve their cybersecurity efforts.**

## Education Policy Governance

- The constitutional authority given to the State Board of Education, the Kansas Legislature, and the Governor.
- The governance responsibilities assigned to the Kansas State High School Activities Association.
- The authority of local boards of education.
- **Amending the student data privacy act to allow for data sharing to participate in research and evaluation of student outcomes**
- **Changing statute to provide equitable compensation for State Board Members in line with recent changes in Legislative compensation.**

## Wichita USD 259 Presentation

### Superintendent Bielefeld

The superintendent noted that USD 259 is the largest district in Kansas and one of the largest in the country. There are approximately 46,566 students, 111 languages spoken, 5,500 full time employees, 88 school buildings, 10 million square feet of interior building space, and buses travel 8.6 million miles per year. Last year some school buildings were closed and were able to reallocate teachers and now have very few teacher vacancies. There were 175 new teachers.

The district emphasizes every student being successful. There is rich diversity, In terms of BOE priorities there two areas: academic outcomes and fiscal responsibility. There are three goals for all students:

- Graduation is vitally important.
- Post secondary assets (Kindergarten readiness, Zillo, HS
- Sense of safety and belonging (culture of belonging)

### Goals by 2029:

They have a goal of 85% graduation. They are presently 79.2%.

Post secondary assets goal is 50% will have five or more assets prior to graduation.

To have students feel safe and connected to their school at a 90% level by 2029.

The superintendent shared a story about a Dillions' building that the district bought. It was an empty building, but now it is a training center for aviation training: automation, sheet metal, maintenance. Students take a core class and then pick one of the three pathways. The fourth semester is work-based learning.

Graduation rates from 2018 74% to 84.3% in 2024. This is a rise of 10.3% This past year enrollment raised by 5%. Mr. Bielefeld went through the demographic groups and

1:59  
USD 259

explained the graduation rates for each. He noted that the district has reallocated funds and invested in programs that effective at supporting student success.

He ended with the facility master plan, approved by the Wichita Board of Education on August 26, 2024. This is a \$450 million bond issue that can be funded with no tax rate increase that will be on the ballot in February. The plan is complex with rebuilding seven school buildings, building three new facilities, renovating and repurposing five spaces, and closing and relocate six facilities. Four school facilities will be closed.

The Board gave the superintendent a standing ovation for the inspiring graduation rate increases.

### **WED Item 6: Consent Agenda**

Mr. Porter move that the Kansas State Board of Education approve those items on the Consent Agenda (without c and d). Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

3:14:10  
Consent

### **Items taken off the Consent Agenda**

Mr. Porter moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve d. and c. that has been taken off the consent agenda. Dr. Horst seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-1. Mrs. Dombrosky voted no.

The Board Attorney will share a report via email.

### **Committee Reports:**

Mr. Porter attended the Migrant Conference in Denver last month and was amazed at how many attendees were former migrants. He found the conference very inspiring.

3:20:15  
Reports

Mr. McNiece reminded everyone of the Roundtable luncheon at the KASB conference next Saturday.

### **WED Act on Board Travel**

Mrs. Hopkins moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the Board travel requests as presented. Mr. McNiece seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

### **Future Requests**

Mrs. Hopkins, conversation about the receive item and action item policy and looking at assessments on elementary, middle schools, in parcels, a granular look, for instance, how third grade is reading compared to other specific levels.

Mrs. Dombrosky information on federal grants and how a grant coming into a school might affect other children, forms, CTE, federal food program, how that affects the local economy.

Dr. Horst is interested in AI issues. There are lawsuits being filed because of the use of AI by students. There is not a clear delineation of what is appropriate and what is not. Is there a policy that should be developed about how students can use AI?

Mr. Hershberger requested the Kansas Food action network be included in Legislative Priorities.

Mrs. Arnold when a system is not receiving accreditation, there is technical support that KSDE offers – she would like to know what that is, how that assistance happens.

Chair Haas adjourned the meeting at 12:30.

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Chair Melanie Haas

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Board Secretary Deborah Bremer