The meeting is archived on YouTube KSDE Livemedia channel. The time stamps are aligned with those videos.

Kansas State Board of Education
Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Call to Order

Chair Cathy Hopkins called the meeting of the Kansas State Board of Education to order at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, December 9, 2025, in the boardroom of the Landon State Office Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, Kansas. Chair Hopkins read the mission statement for the Board and then asked for a moment of silent reflection or prayer, followed by everyone standing and joining in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

All the Board members were present:
(listed alphabetically by last name)
Mrs. Betty Arnold
Mrs. Michelle Dombrosky
Mrs. Melanie Haas
Mr. Dennis Hershberger
Mrs. Cathy Hopkins, Chair
Dr. Beryl New
Mrs. Connie O'Brien
Mrs. Debby Potter
Mr. Jim Porter
Mr. Danny Zeck, Vice Chair
Mr. Mark Ferguson, Board Attorney and Commissioner Watson were in attendance at the Board table.

*Note: The November minutes for the regular and the special meeting were not ready to be voted on. They will be completed and voted on at a later date.

AGENDA

Mrs. Arnold moved to approve the agenda for December 9 & 10, 2025, and consent agenda items, without consent items h & j. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. **Motion carried 8-2 with Mrs. Potter and Mrs. O'Brien present not voting.**

Consent Agenda items approved:

Monthly personnel report
Local Professional Development Plans
Recommendations for Licensure Waivers

USD 233 Olathe capital improvement and hold bond election
USD 373 newton capital Improvement and hold bond election

Consent Item H. and Consent Item J.

Mrs. Arnold moved that consent item h. *Act on request to renew the contract with the Bruman Group to support the administration of Perkins V, $20,000 per year with a 3 year renewa*l, be approved and consent item j. *Act on recommendation for supplemental 2025-2026 AmeriCorps funding for USD 260 Derby* be approved. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-1 with Mrs. Dombrosky voting no.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, presented an update to the State Board of Education outlining progress toward strategic goals and key initiatives. The report emphasized the Board's commitment to improving educational outcomes through targeted leadership development, policy alignment, and instructional excellence.

The Board reaffirmed its focus on three overarching goals:

- Quality School Improvement: Strengthening the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) process by emphasizing the four fundamentals of school improvement.
- Quality Leadership Development: Promoting a culture of high expectations across classrooms, schools, and districts to ensure equitable access to rigorous instruction and grade-level standards.
- Policy, Regulation, and Alignment: Streamlining and aligning policies and regulations in Pre-K–12 education to support school improvement and prioritize student success.

To achieve these goals, the Board will employ a structured framework that includes reinforcing lead indicators, sustaining progress through intentional planning, and measuring success through consistent reporting and engagement.

Literacy Matters Initiative

The Commissioner highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen literacy across Kansas schools. This includes leveraging remaining ESSER/EANS federal funds to support structured literacy initiatives, particularly through LETRS training for teachers. The goal is to maximize available resources and prevent unspent funds from reverting to the federal government.

Overall Focus

The December 2025 report underscores the State Board's commitment to advancing literacy, aligning policies to support school improvement, and fostering strong leadership across Kansas schools. Strategic use of federal funds and proactive engagement with educators and communities remain central to achieving these objectives.

Citizen's Open Forum

Forum 27:30

Chair Hopkins opened the Citizen's Forum at 10:40 a.m. and invited the following people to speak to the Board:

Lori Kopp, Attorney, Kansas Association of School Boards, spoke about the complexity of Applied Behavioral Analysis Therapy (ABA) and argued that the proposed KSDE guidance is not comprehensive or correct.

Henry McClure, Citizen, spoke of his visit to McClure Elementary and the beauty of the students and the teachers. He will be working for transparency in the work of the State Board and each person on it.

Sharon Knewtson, Parent at Kansas School for the Deaf, spoke in support of American Sign Language (ASL) and urged the Board to hire great teachers who are fluent in ASL. She thanked the members who served on the Task Force for KSD.

Debby Potter, Board member, spoke about some letters that were given to her by the Board Attorney. She feels these letters were legal intimidation. She feels it is an attempt to intimidate the entire board to not pull items from consent, ask questions, or vote certain ways.

Act on Legislative Priorities for Kansas State Board of Education

Dr. Frank Harwood, Deputy Commissioner Fiscal and Administrative Services

Gabrielle Hull, Legislative Coordinator

Legislative Priorities 42:15 And later in the afternoon (two sections)

This part of the Board meeting actually took place in two sections, one at 10:45 in the morning and one at 3:00 in the afternoon but for simplicity all the votes are recorded together. Dr. Harwood took the Board through the entire series of votes, with questions and discussions scattered throughout.

Academic Support Efforts: The State Board prioritizes the importance of academic support efforts across the state, including

Second time stamp is 5:17:30

1. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "student opportunities to gain workforce experience before graduation including:

a. Encouraging incentives to support school district expansion of public-private partnerships with business and industry to allow for internships, mentorships, and other opportunities." In the 2026 Legislative Priorities.
b. "Continued coordination and investment in career and technical education programs that are aligned with workforce needs" in the 2026 Legislative priorities. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion.
Motion passed 6-4 with Mrs. Potter, Mr. Zeck, Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Dombrosky voting no.

2. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "reduced waiting time after retirement to return to teaching and reduce or eliminate the financial penalty" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

3. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "the goal to move Kansas school employees currently on KPERS 3 to KPERS 2" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

4. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Additional funding to expand and enhance the current state assessment program and ensure adequate test security aligned with best practices" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-4. Mrs. Potter, Mr. Zeck, Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Dombrosky voting no.

Health and Safety: The State Board supports a healthy and safe learning environment for students, including:

1. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "the legislative recommendations of the School Bus Stop Arm Violation Committee" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

2. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "the efforts to reduce human trafficking in Kansas" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

3. Mr. Porter moved to include "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" in the 2026 Legislative priorities. Mrs. O'Brien seconded. Motion carried 8-1-1 Mrs. Potter voted no, Mrs. Dombrosky present not voting.

4. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Expansion of the Farm to Plate initiative to support student and family access to healthy foods in local communities" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Funding: The State Board recognizes the essential function of adequate and equitable state funding for schools, including:

1. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Only using public education funds for public schools" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Dombrosky seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-1 with Mrs. Potter voting no.

2. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Following state statute and moving towards funding 92% of the excess cost of special education" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

3. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Opportunities to expand and fund early childhood and kindergarten readiness" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-3 with Mrs. Potter, Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Dombrosky voting no.

4. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Funding transportation for all students in all unsafe situations, regardless of mileage" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

5. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Continued funding for the teacher apprenticeship program" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-0-1 with Mrs. Dombrosky present not voting.

6. Mrs. Arnold moved to include "Increased state support on bond and interest" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-2-1 with Mr. Hershberger, Mrs. Potter voting no. Mrs. Dombrosky present not voting.

7. Mrs. Haas moved to include "Financial support for school districts to enhance and improve their cybersecurity efforts" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

8. Mrs. Dombrosky moved to include "Adequate funding for the Kansas Department of Education, and the Kansas State Board of Education to allow for the implementation of their constitutional and statutory duties" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Potter seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

9. Mrs. Potter moved to include "Adequate funding for the Kansas State School for the Blind and the Kansas School for the Deaf" to allow for the implementation of their constitutional and statutory duties" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Dombrosky seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

10. Mr. Porter moved to include "Funding to provide equitable compensation for State Board Members in line with recent changes in Legislative compensation" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-2 with Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Potter voting no.

Education Policy Governance: The State Board affirms the distinct roles of education policy governance in Kansas, including:

1. Mrs. Haas moved to include "The constitutional authority given to the State Board of Education, the Kansas Legislature, and the Governor, including the State Board's authority to accredit school systems through the continued implementation of the Kansas Education System of Accreditation" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. O'Brien seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

2. Mrs. Dombrosky moved to include "The governance responsibilities assigned to the Kansas State High School Activities Association" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

3. Mrs. Haas moved to include "The authority of local boards of education" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-0-1 with Mrs. Potter present not voting.

4. Mr. Hershberger moved to include "Support in eliminating, revising, and designing regulations to enhance the school improvement process, allowing school systems to focus on student success" in the 2026 Legislative Priorities. Mrs. Haas seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Receive Medical Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy in School Settings Guidance
Special Guest: Linda Heitzman-Powell, KS Center for Autism Training at Kansas University
Attorney Brian Dempsey, Assistant Director, Special Education
General Counsel R. Scott Gordon, KSDE

ABA 1:26:15 (continued after the lunch break)

Ms. Linda Heitzman-Powell gave an overview of what ABA therapy consists of and how it is used in the classroom. The Board engaged in conversation with her on the details of classroom use. Attorney Brian Dempsey and General Counsel R. Scott Gordon presented the proposed guidance for local school districts to be voted on in January

2026.

Spring Hill High School Orchestra, Taygun Ozakinci
The Board was invited to attend a concert by students from the Spring Hill Orchestra over at the State Capitol building.

Approve and sign a resolution supporting the placement of Tactile Braille flags in all Kansas Schools with the American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution as supporters
Randolph Cabral, Flag Creator and leader of the effort
Dennis Hershberger, Board member
Flags
3:55:15
Mr. Cabral shared the history of the braille flags and the effort to place these tactile flags in each school. Geroge Horn of the Kansas American Legion also spoke in support as well as Patti Unruh of the Kansas Daughters of the American Revolution.

The Board members all signed a formal resolution supporting the placing of Polymer Tactile Braille American flags in all Kansas K-12 public schools and gave a copy to Mr. Cabral who will take it to the Governor.

Receive draft standards for higher education Visually Impaired and Technology and Engineering preparation programs
Receive recommendations of the Evaluation Review Committee (ERC) for higher Education Program Approval
Dr. Catherine Chmidling, Teacher Licensure
ERC
4:15:00
Dr. Chmidling brought the draft standards and the recommendations from the ERC to the board as review items. They will be voted on in January 2026.

Update Part 1: New International Dyslexia Association (IDA) definition for dyslexia and Kansas initiatives for dyslexia and reading
Dr. Laurie Curtis, Early Literacy/Dyslexia Program Manager
Dyslexia
4:51:45
Dr. Curtis shared the new definition and then gave a presentation on initiatives with the science of reading and dyslexia.
IDA 2025 Definition of Dyslexia
"Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both and vary depending on the orthography. These difficulties occur along a continuum of severity and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual's peers. The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve combinations of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences that interact throughout development. Underlying difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common but not universal, and early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include reading comprehension

problems and reduced reading and writing experience that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement. Psychological well-being and employment opportunities also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective."

Key Points

1. Science of Reading
    - A research-based approach combining neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and education.
    - Guides effective teaching and assessment for reading and writing difficulties.
2. Definitions of Dyslexia
    - 2002 IDA Definition: Focused on phonological deficits causing word recognition and decoding difficulties.
    - 2025 IDA Definition: Broader view—dyslexia varies in severity, persists despite effective instruction, and involves genetic, neurobiological, and environmental factors. Includes impacts on psychological well-being and employment.
3. Expanded Understanding
    - Dyslexia exists on a continuum; students can learn to read.
    - Early oral language weaknesses often predict literacy challenges.
    - Secondary consequences include anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem.
4. Myths to Dispel
    - Dyslexia is not caused by reading less at home.
    - It cannot be cured by colored overlays or special fonts.
    - Students with dyslexia can succeed in advanced courses and benefit from intervention even in middle/high school.
5. Kansas Initiatives
    - No outside clinical diagnosis required for school interventions.
    - Screening begins in kindergarten (sometimes PreK) and continues through grade 9.
    - Schools can identify dyslexia through comprehensive evaluations.
6. Other Components
    - LETRS training, Seal of Literacy, structured literacy, specialized support, and higher education standards are part of the broader strategy.

<u>Overall Message</u>

Dyslexia is a complex, lifelong condition that requires early identification, evidence-based instruction, and ongoing support. Kansas schools have systems in place to address these needs without requiring medical diagnoses.

Act on request to approve the contracts for Cheney, Holton and Manhattan Catholic School for the testing of Healthier Kansas Menu Revisions

Kelly Chanay, Director, Child Nutrition and Wellness

Healthy Meals 6:25:30

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the contract with USD 268 Cheney, USD 336 Holton, and Manhattan Catholic School for testing of the Healthier Kansas Menu revisions, with an alternative back up of USD 362 Prairie View. Mrs. Potter seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Teacher Highlight: Thomas Fulbright, winner of Civics History Prize "Becoming American"

Nathan McAlister, Humanities Program Manager

Teacher 6:21:34

Mr. McAlister explained that today's teacher, Thomas Fulbright, entered a lesson plan to the Building Better Citizens: An Innovative Curriculum Contest, which encourages teachers to use U.S. citizenship test questions creatively as part of classroom activities. Lessons were judged on clarity, rationale, methodology, standards alignment, creativity, engagement, and differentiation.

- Thomas Fulbright has taught at Hope Street Academy for 18 years.
- Subjects: American History, Current Social Issues, Historical Inquiry, and Economics.
- Holds a master's in social studies education (University of Kansas) and is pursuing a second master's in American history (Ashland University).
- Awards: 2018 Kansas History Teacher of the Year (Gilder Lehrman) and 2023 James Madison Fellowship Kansas Fellow.

Lesson Focus

- Inspired by witnessing a naturalization ceremony at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site.
- Aims to move beyond rote memorization of citizenship test answers and explore deeper meaning of American identity.
- Central Question: Does the USCIS exam reflect what it truly means to be an American?
- Objective: Students will conclude whether the exam is more than a factual test and reflects American ideals.

Lesson Structure

The lesson is divided into four tasks:

1. Historical Context: Reading excerpts from English Common Law (Blackstone) on citizenship principles.

2. Law Analysis: Reviewing U.S. naturalization laws and requirements.
3. Drawing Conclusions: Analyzing presidential speeches (Washington, Reagan, Obama) and USCIS exam questions.
4. Communicating a Conclusion: Students present arguments through various media (posters, essays, digital projects).

Key Takeaways

- Encourages critical thinking about citizenship beyond legal definitions.
- Connects historical, legal, and civic perspectives to modern identity.
- Offers flexibility for students to express conclusions creatively.

The Board was very supportive of Mr. Fulbright, as was his District Superintendent, Dr. Anderson, and his principal, Mrs. Johnson.

The Board then went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the evaluations for staff members: Commissioner, Board Attorney and Board Secretary. After the Board returned, Chair Hopkins recessed the meeting until the following morning at 9 a.m.

Starts 5:05

Kansas State Board of Education
Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Chair Hopkins called the meeting to order at 9:00. All Board members were present. Dr. Watson and Mr. Ferguson were at the Board table.

AI 5:40

Presentation on AI in Education
Dr. Jake Steel, Director, Strategy and Operational Alignment

The presentation, titled "Artificial Intelligence: A Learning Series with the State Board of Education," introduced participants to the concept of AI literacy and its importance in education. Dr. Steel explained what AI literacy is, why it is needed, and highlighted several frameworks designed to guide schools in teaching about AI. The session emphasized that young people are already using AI tools, raising the question of whether they are truly literate in their use.

The presenter outlined three major warnings:

- the risks of chatbot companions,
- the tendency to anthropomorphize AI,
- and the principle of treating adult users like adults.

Dr. Steel cited research showing that AI companions could bypass safety measures and pose serious risks, recommending that individuals under 18 should not use such platforms. He also stressed that AI was only a mathematical algorithm, not a sentient being, and warned against attributing human-like qualities to it. Additionally, he discussed evolving policies around adult use of AI, including age-gating and user control over personalization.

The session introduced homework tasks aimed at connecting teaching with AI to teaching about AI. It referenced initiatives like *TeachAI,* which sought to promote awareness, policy development, community engagement, and capacity building. Several AI literacy frameworks were showcased, including those emphasizing understanding, evaluation, and responsible use of emerging technologies, as well as frameworks focusing on knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Finally, the presentation previewed upcoming discussions on how schools could vet AI tools, addressing issues such as data privacy, accessibility, security, transparency, human oversight, and training.

Receive request to initiate RFP (request for proposal) contract bid process for the maintenance and enhancements of the Kansas Integrated Accountability System (KIAS) suite of applications

KIAS 46:30

Dean Zajic, Asst. Director, Special Education and Title Services

The Kansas Integrated Accountability System (KIAS) is a comprehensive oversight system aligning monitoring, data collection, funding, and supervision for ESEA and IDEA programs and related state requirements. The KIAS Suite of Applications, managed by the Special Education and Title Services (SETS) team, automates data collection, monitoring, and funding through secure platforms.

Components of the Suite:

- Kansas Grants Management System: Handles district grant functions like budgeting, reporting, and awarding.
- Kansas Grant Reporting System: Collects and analyzes federally and state-required data.
- Kansas Integrated Accountability System: Provides an online platform for programmatic and fiscal monitoring and documentation collection.

Background:

- Originated as three separate systems procured via RFPs starting in 2015.
- Same vendor awarded all three projects, improving alignment and cost efficiency.
- Initial RFPs focused on development and launch; maintenance followed.

Current Need:

- KSDE requires ongoing maintenance and enhancements as requirements and technology evolve.
- A single provider is preferred due to system integration.
- Previous attempt to retain the existing vendor under a maintenance exception was denied.
- KSDE seeks authority to issue a competitive RFP for qualified vendors.

In December, the Board will be asked to approve this RFP request.

Act on review of KAR 91-41 Mentor Teacher Program Requirements

KAR 91-41 1:18:00

Dr. Renee Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve removing the requirement to turn in applications and reports associated with mentor program grant funding unless and until funding is reinstated. Seconded by Mr. Hershberger. Motion carried 10-0.

Regulation Review 1:22:41

Receive Item on Regulation Review

Dr. Renee Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services

Background

Kansas regulation 91-1-216 requires each educational agency to design, submit, and maintain a formal professional development (PD) plan annually. These plans must include needs assessments, goals, activities, and evaluation criteria, and be submitted to the State Board by August 1 for approval, modification, or disapproval within a semester.

Current Challenges

- Administrative Burden: The annual submission and approval process consumes significant time for districts and KSDE.
- Process Disconnect: PD planning is separate from School Improvement efforts, even though districts already integrate professional learning into improvement goals and the Four Fundamentals.

Recommendation

KSDE recommends eliminating the requirement for districts to submit a separate PD plan. Instead, professional learning should be embedded within School Improvement plans, reducing unnecessary administrative obligations and allowing districts to focus on locally driven priorities.

Benefits

- Alignment: PD becomes fully integrated with district goals and student outcomes.
- Efficiency: Reduces compliance workload for districts and KSDE.
- Flexibility: Enables districts to adapt PD quickly to local needs.

Next Steps

- Adopt regulatory changes to remove the separate PD plan submission requirement.
- Provide guidance and templates for embedding PD into School Improvement documentation.
- Shift oversight from plan approval to monitoring through School Improvement reviews

High Quality 1:28:00

Presentation on High Quality Instructional Materials Survey

Dr. Renee Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services

Dr. Nugent explored three key questions in this presentation:

- the role instructional materials play in quality instruction,
- how KSDE supports local selection processes,
- and the current state of instructional materials in Kansas along with next steps.

Quality instruction is more than just resources—it requires classrooms where teachers hold high expectations, use data-driven practices, provide cohesive and standards-aligned lessons, and engage students deeply. To achieve this vision, Dr. Nugent emphasized that Kansas must prioritize professional learning and collaboration at both state and district levels.

The department offers a range of supports, including standards alignment toolkits, instructional visions, dashboards, and guidance for selecting and implementing instructional materials. These resources aim to ensure that revised state standards translate into meaningful classroom practice. Research shows that students often spend hundreds of hours on assignments that are not grade-appropriate, while teachers devote significant time creating materials, which can lead to lower-quality lessons. High-quality instructional materials (HQIMs) allow teachers to focus on instruction rather than building curriculum from scratch, improving both teacher efficiency and student outcomes.

Access to grade-level content is critical: studies indicate that students who start the year behind make significantly more progress when given grade-appropriate assignments. States vary in their approach to supporting districts—some mandate materials, others provide no guidance. KSDE takes a balanced approach by offering differentiated guidance for English language arts, math, and science while respecting local decision-making.

To strengthen selection processes, KSDE leverages third-party reviews from *EdReports*, which evaluates instructional materials against evidence-based criteria. However, KSDE cautions that districts should go beyond surface ratings like "Meets Expectations" and examine detailed reports to ensure alignment with local priorities and student needs.

In Fall 2025, KSDE surveyed districts and accredited private schools to identify commonly used instructional materials and future selection timelines. With a 95% district response rate, this data will inform a new shared information tool launching in early 2026. The tool will help superintendents and curriculum leaders collaborate, anticipate challenges, and align professional learning with the materials in use across Kansas.

Ultimately, KSDE's strategy combines strong guidance, shared data, and professional learning to ensure that every Kansas student has access to high-quality instructional materials that support rigorous, standards-aligned instruction.

Receive item to approve Kansas State Board of Education Policy Committee language change for the financial threshold to approve items
Melanie Haas, Policy Chair
Dr. John Hess, Director, Fiscal Services and Operations

Policy
2:55:00

Mrs. Haas presented the new language as requested by the Board which would raise the threshold to $25,000 and define what is brought to the Board and what is not.

Receive Kansas School for the Deaf Task Force on School Improvement
Lisa Karney, Education Program Consultant
State Board Members; Mrs. Dombrosky, Mrs. Haas, and Dr. New

KSD Task Force 3:02:13

Mrs. Karney shared the history of this task force. The Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD) convened a Task Force on School Improvement to evaluate current practices and recommend strategies for enhancing educational outcomes for deaf students. This initiative reflects a commitment to ensuring equitable, high-quality education tailored to the unique needs of this community.

Task Force Membership

The Task Force comprises a diverse group of stakeholders, including:

- State Board Members: Melanie Haas, Dr. Beryl New, and Michelle Dombrosky
- Parent Representatives: Dr. Kylie Stewart, Zach Wentz, and Sharon Knewtson
- KSD Administrators: Luanne Barron, Molly Rothwell, and Ben Cardon
- KSDE Liaison: Lisa Karney

This collaborative structure ensures that perspectives from governance, families, and school leadership inform the recommendations.

Key Recommendations

1. Reading and Math Instruction
   Implement appropriate instructional methodologies specifically designed for deaf students to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes.
2. KESA Strategic Plan Alignment
   Incorporate insights from the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) into Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) planning.
3. Transition Goals and Focus
   Strengthen post-graduation transition planning to support students in achieving success beyond high school.
4. Teacher Pipeline and Retention
   Review and revise Deaf Education licensure requirements, comparing them to other states, and address accreditation standards for Kansas higher education institutions to ensure a robust teacher workforce.
5. KSDE Role and Resources
   Update the KSDE website to make parent resources more accessible, elevate parents' rights, provide clear IEP information, and highlight organizations such as Families Together.

School Improve Days 3:25:26

Update on School Improvement Days
Dr. Jay Scott

Dr. Scott reported to the Board on the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) process and insights gathered from recent School Improvement Days. The goal is to review feedback, identify trends in action plans, and clarify objectives moving forward.

The presentation began by emphasizing the importance of understanding the purpose behind these initiatives. School Improvement Days are designed to foster collaboration, reflection, and strategic planning among districts.

Timeline for School Improvement

The roadmap spans three school years:

- 2024–2025: Reporting and evaluation, with initial action plan development.
- 2025–2026: Continued evaluation, action planning, and implementation.
- 2026–2027: Full implementation and outcome evaluation, marking a significant investment in high-leverage actions.

Evaluation of outcomes will begin in 2026–2027 to ensure meaningful progress before measuring results.

Feedback from School Improvement Days

Across 36 sessions at 11 sites, approximately 144 school systems and 870 DLT members participated, supported by 72 facilitators and specialists. Participants highlighted:

- What went well: Collaboration across districts, clear expectations, and focused time for refining action plans.
- Areas for improvement: More time for team planning, reducing redundancy, and possibly shortening the schedule.
- Overall sentiment: Strong appreciation for collaboration, organization, and facilitator support.

Action Plan Trends

Emerging trends show emphasis on fundamental components and structures that drive improvement. Visual data from radar graphs and component analysis illustrate these priorities.

Closing and Contacts

Dr. Scott concluded by acknowledging regional executives and support staff, encouraging continued engagement and collaboration.

Chair Report, Board member reports, Travel Requests, and Future Agenda Requests

Mrs. Arnold would like the Policy Committee to look at two issues: 1) Appointing a formal Sargeant-at-Arms or Parliamentarian, 2) Create a process/policy for resolving conflict or addressing grievances.

Mr. Hershberger brought up the question of Robert's Rules of Order and how much that guides the Board. The Board needs to work together and not be divided, he stated. The Board needs collaboration.

Mrs. Dombrosky mentioned that 6 votes make or change policy, not just a majority of those members present. Having the rules clear are helpful, like speed limits. Likes the idea of a parliamentarian.

Dr. New agreed that the Board members are all her colleagues and her friends. She believes they are all here for one reason: to take care of the children of Kansas.

Mrs. Haas shared some of her experience attending the Education Commission of the States. She is a Commissioner for Kansas, appointed by the Governor. She was immensely proud of Kansan Melissa Rooker who presented on early childhood education. The conference was short and held in Florida. Topics included AI, cell phones and high quality instructional material.

Mrs. Potter followed up with the Clearwater Elementary West and gave them a district trophy for raising student reading levels. She clarified that she does not have specific alliances or allegiances with anyone on the Board.

Chair Hopkins asked for a motion to replace Vice Chair Zeck as legislative liaison.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education appoint Board member Dr. Beryl New to serve as the Board liaison to the Kansas State Legislature for the 2026 session. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Mrs. Dombrosky reminded the Board that it is important to note while testifying to the legislature that not all votes on the Board priorities were unanimous.

KAIRS professional development will be in February, the Monday night prior to the Board meeting and all members are invited.

Mrs. Haas moved that the Board Travel Requests be approved. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Mrs. Haas requested that the Board revisit phone policy. She also wants to talk about age-appropriate use of devices. She would like to have a retreat on Board policy.

Vice Chair Zeck also requests a meeting on technology, perhaps a meeting just on tech issues. Screentime, data, etc. are issues he is concerned with.

Mr. Porter wants to hear what schools are doing with technology. Are there effective uses of technology? ABA needs to be addressed quickly.

Dr. Watson said there are some events coming up at the January meeting: State of the State, CTSO lunch with students, breakfast with SEAC.

Chair Hopkins adjourned the meeting. Tuesday, December 16th is the Special Board meeting (in person) with the Search Firm, Hazard, Young and Attea Associates at 10 a.m. with interviews for each Board member in the afternoon.

_____ _____

Chair Cathy Hopkins Board Secretary Deborah Bremer

This meeting was recorded and is archived on YouTube KSDE LiveMedia.

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Chair Hopkins called the meeting to order. All members were present. Dr. Watson and the Board Attorney were both present. The Board mission was read, a time for prayer or contemplation was shared, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Hopkins explained that the special meeting was called to start the process with the executive search firm, Hazard, Young and Attea Associates (HYA) which has been contracted to assist the Board in hiring a new Commissioner of Education.

The HYA staff, Dr. Max Richie, Dr. Max McGee and Frank Henderson, introduced themselves and lead the planning meeting.

They went through the review search process:
Engagement
Recruitment
Selection
Transition

Dr. Richie showed the Board members how to connect to the HYA Board Portal, which is the best way to get updates and stay in the loop with any developments. The Board portal shares information with Board members and others who have signed the non-disclosure documents. All the applicant information is to be kept confidential until the final candidates are interviewed and they will be made public.

Dr. McGee shared the timeline, particularly emphasizing that the job description will be posted by the end of this week, December 19th. On March 3, HYA will present a review of applicants to the Board and on March 11 & 12 interviews with candidates will begin. The Board will select their choice for Commissioner the week of March 15, and negotiations will begin. In April at the Board meeting there will be a formal appointment of a new Commissioner. By July 1, or before, the new Commissioner will begin.

Dr. Richie had a conversation with the Board about what the application should include, and they discussed confidentiality for final candidates.

Mr. Henderson reviewed what stakeholders the Board would like to see involved in a series of focus group conversations, leading up to HYA developing a Leadership Profile

Report for the Board.

Dr. McGee discussed the survey and how the Board wishes to communicate the search process with stakeholders (website created by KSDE).

There was a general discussion with Board members and then Chair Hopkins adjourned the meeting, and the next meeting will be on January 13th at 10 a.m.

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Chair Cathy Hopkins	Board Secretary Deborah Bremer