Kansas State Board of Education
Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Cathy Hopkins called the meeting of the Kansas State Board of Education to order at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 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

Nine Board members were present (Mrs. Potter was attending a funeral)
(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 (not present until later in the day)
Mr. Jim Porter
Mr. Danny Zeck, Vice Chair

Mr. Mark Ferguson, Board Attorney and Commissioner Watson were in attendance at the Board table.

MINUTES

(January Minutes) Mrs. Haas moved to approved the minutes for the January 13 & 14, 2026, Kansas State Board of Education meeting. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. **Motion carried 9-0.** Mrs. Potter was not present.

Added: Mrs. Arnold moved that the KSBE set aside some time, based on the lack of clarity considering a board member's use of the citizen's forum as a speaking platform, to allow the entire board to discuss the issue, which would give the Board Policy Committee insight. The time set aside would be at the discretion of the Board

leadership. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Chair Hopkins noted she would put it at the end of the Wednesday meeting. Motion carried 9-0.

AGENDA

Mrs. Haas moved to approve the agenda (and consent agenda) for January 13 & 14, 2026. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-0.

Consent Agenda items approved:

- Notified of monthly personnel report
- Act on local professional development plans
- Act on recommendations for licensure waivers
- Act to contract with Pittsburg State (Dr. David Hurford) to provide services on dyslexia and literacy.
- Receive Notification of intent to participate in Tax Credit for Low Income Student Scholarship for *Kansas City Christian* and the *Golden Belt Community Foundation* in Great Bend.

Commissioner's Report

Dr. Randy Watson

The report outlines updates from Dr. Randy Watson, including ongoing work of the Kansas School for the Deaf (KSSD) Task Force, which emphasizes improving reading and math instruction for deaf students, strengthening transition planning after graduation, aligning work with the KESA Strategic Plan, and expanding teacher licensure pathways and retention efforts. The task force also recommends enhancing KSDE's role by improving its website, increasing accessibility of parent resources, elevating parents' rights information, and supporting IEP-related needs.

The presentation notes the active search for a new superintendent and provides a detailed overview of special education excess cost trends, showing significant funding gaps—$226 million below statutory targets for FY 2026 and $259 million for FY 2027. Despite savings in state general funds due to reduced weighted FTE, the Board's budget request of $145 million far exceeds current legislative proposals. The report concludes with an update on the "Literacy Matters" summer project and a reminder of KSDE's ongoing initiatives.

Citizen's Open Forum

Chair Hopkins opened the Citizen's Forum and invited the following people to speak to the Board:

Harmony Jarratt, Caleb Jarratt, Kelsey Stock: These three individuals are all parents of students attending the Kansas School for the Deaf. They each had the same positive

message about their experience with the school. Their children have thrived and are learning to read well. They want to counter some of the previous comments that have been made to the official Task Force, and to the Board. They feel that 90% of the parents of KSD students are happy with the school and with the teaching of literacy.

The Chair closed the Citizen's Forum.

The Kansas University Center for Innovation, Design and Digital Learning will share their framework for using AI responsibility within the classroom

Dr. James Basham
Dr. Trey Vasquez

This presentation, created by the Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning (CIDDL) at the University of Kansas, introduces a comprehensive framework for the responsible integration of artificial intelligence across PreK–20 educational settings. Developed under federally funded projects, the work emphasizes that its content does not represent official U.S. Department of Education policy. CIDDL's mission centers on increasing knowledge, capacity, and adoption of innovative technologies—including AI, assistive technology, and educational technology—within special education and leadership preparation programs. The center aims to prepare faculty, future educators, and leaders to effectively navigate rapidly evolving AI-infused learning environments.

The presentation highlights why AI matters in education, noting its growing role in personalization, accessibility, workload reduction, and learning support. Foundational definitions of artificial intelligence are provided, emphasizing AI as machine-based systems capable of making predictions, recommendations, or decisions based on human-defined objectives. Examples of common AI applications—such as brainstorming, translation, leveling text, generating images, solving problems, and creating instructional content—demonstrate its wide-ranging potential.

Several slides address the significant impact AI can have on supporting all students, including greater personalization, increased accessibility of materials, multimodal learning analytics, and more efficient workflows for educators. Ethical considerations are also emphasized: data privacy, bias mitigation, accessibility, transparency, maintaining human judgment, and verifying accuracy. These principles underscore the need for responsible use as AI becomes increasingly present across educational and workplace environments.

The presentation connects these ideas to broader societal shifts, citing statistics showing rapid adoption of AI among knowledge workers and the likelihood that many current students will eventually work in jobs that do not yet exist. This context sets the stage for introducing CIDDL's AI Integration Framework, which outlines four key

domains: building a human-centered AI foundation; implementing future-focused strategic planning; ensuring AI educational opportunities for every student; and supporting continuous evaluation, professional learning, and community development. Each domain includes specific guidance such as creating task forces, conducting risk analyses, aligning AI tools with instructional goals, ensuring inclusivity, and building digital judgment across educational roles.

The presentation also aligns CIDDL's framework with the NIST AI Risk Management Framework, reinforcing the importance of governance, mapping needs and risks, measuring impacts, and managing implementation through continuous improvement. Additional "back pocket" slides explore the need for AI guardrails, noting that AI use is already widespread and existing policies often do not fully address it. The three guardrail lenses—Safety & Privacy, Opportunity for All, and Transparency & Accountability—provide practical expectations for responsible use in schools. These include protecting sensitive data, ensuring equitable access, auditing for bias, keeping humans involved in decisions, and documenting AI tool usage.

The presentation concludes by inviting questions and encouraging educators and leaders to reach out and engage further with CIDDL's work. Overall, the slides provide a structured, thoughtful roadmap for integrating AI responsibly, effectively, and equitably across the education system, with particular attention to supporting students with disabilities and preparing educators for the evolving landscape of AI-enabled learning.

Reading Corner: reading in every classroom
Tanner Helton, Junction City, Physical Ed Teacher
Claire Clifford, Halstead, Music teacher

The presentation explains how literacy and academic concepts can be intentionally integrated into physical education to support student learning. It begins by introducing the idea of creating literacy-rich environments within physical education (PE) classes, emphasizing collaboration, careful cross-curricular planning, and embedding key vocabulary in class discussions. The presenter, Tanner Helton, shares his educational background and experience at Morris Hill Elementary.

Throughout the slides, examples show how PE activities can reinforce English Language Arts and math skills. Locomotor skills practice is paired with letter recognition for younger students, and partner-based activities build communication abilities alongside sight-word practice. Throwing and catching exercises are used to support instruction on digraphs, vowel blends, and high-frequency words. Collaboration with peers appears as a consistent theme across these activities, highlighting both academic and social learning.

The presentation also includes a cross-curricular planning guide and describes how brief end-of-class concept reviews help connect PE vocabulary with classroom content. A PBIS system encourages participation and supports positive behavior. The presenter notes observed benefits such as better classroom management, improved student regulation after PE, reduced downtime, and alignment with building goals to support students at risk of not meeting grade-level standards. The session concludes by inviting questions from the audience.

Student Performance (Drama) Spring Hill High School
Arianna Wendel. Drama Teacher
USD 230 Spring Hill
Paige Jackson, Solo Musical Theatre
Ian Collins and Trystan Wood, Duet Acting
Ariela Manaj, Scenic Design

McPherson District Technology Presentation
Vincent Shiloh, Superintendent
Ms. Inge Esping, Middle School Principal
Ms. Sarah Corcoran, Social Studies teachers
McPherson Middle School has undertaken a multi-year journey to restore a healthier balance between technology use and student well-being. Beginning around 2018–2020, the school experienced an increase in heavy educational technology use, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the school gradually adopted restrictions on personal devices, streaming platforms, and student-to-student email, eventually initiating conversations about moving away from a 1:1 Chromebook model.

Over time, the school observed significant impacts across academic, social, emotional, and behavioral domains. As technology dependence decreased, students demonstrated improved concentration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and frustration tolerance. Socially, the school noted stronger peer interaction, enhanced empathy, and reductions in technoference-driven issues such as isolation and school avoidance. Emotional well-being also improved, with students showing greater resilience and experiencing less burnout, stress, anxiety, and information overload. These changes coincided with fewer discipline referrals and strong support from staff and parents. The presentation cites authors like Jonathan Haidt and research indicating that limiting phones and screens during the school day boosts performance and attention.

Teachers shared that they were seeing more dysregulation, anxiety, decreased attention, and lower frustration tolerance prior to shifting away from the heavy tech model. Many felt overly tied to digital monitoring tools rather than to classroom

instruction. These experiences, along with professional learning tied to *The Anxious Generation*, book studies, and statewide initiatives focused on distraction-free school environments, helped shape the school's philosophy. Additional resources—including the *Screenagers* documentary and the *Away for the Day* movement—informed their approach.

The implementation unfolded between 2025 and early 2026. Discussions began in the Building Leadership Team, followed by communication with district leaders and the Board of Education. The school pursued grants to fund classroom device carts and prepared staff for a transition away from 1:1 devices. Over the course of 2025, teachers were encouraged to reduce Chromebook dependence. By early 2026, students turned in their individual devices, and classroom carts replaced the previous model.

Early experiences across the school community have been largely positive. Students report feeling lighter—both physically without the devices and academically with more paper-based learning—and say they engage in more face-to-face conversations. Teachers, though facing increased paper grading, see smoother transitions and improved engagement. Administrators note a significant reduction in non-instructional digital issues, though organization remains a skill that some students must relearn. Parents overwhelmingly support the shift, appreciating reduced screen time, though a few express concern about students struggling to keep track of assignments.

The presentation concludes with an invitation for questions and provides contact information for Principal Inge Esping and teacher Sarah Corcoran.

Effect of devices on a student's developments

Susan Dunaway, LCPC, Chief neuroscience officer for Screen Guardians

This presentation explores how digital devices—particularly screens, social media, and emerging AI tools—are affecting student development, learning, and well-being. It begins by framing technology in schools as a complex issue requiring thoughtful consideration. Quoting communication theorist Neil Postman, who wrote, "Every new technology has both benefits and hidden costs and warns that people may grow to admire technologies that actually undermine their ability to think deeply."

The presentation highlights troubling trends over the past decade: rising self-harm and depression among teens, increased antidepressant prescriptions, declining ACT scores, and a sharp drop in college readiness. These trends are positioned alongside the rapid growth of technology in schools, suggesting that the learning environment has changed dramatically—and not necessarily in ways that support students' cognitive or emotional development.

A recurring theme is that screens fragment attention, encourage shallow rather than deep learning, hinder memory retention, and contribute to widespread mental-health and behavioral challenges. They also limit students' opportunities for essential in-person interactions. Slides emphasize that students naturally learn from and with other human beings—not from machines—and that human connection, facial cues, and real-time social feedback are foundational to healthy development.

The presentation cites research showing that many students now spend one to four hours per school day on computers, with a significant portion exceeding four hours. Studies also indicate that students are frequently off-task when using school-issued devices—sometimes for more than half of each hour. When students are on screens, they miss opportunities for peer connection, social-skill development, hands-on engagement, physical movement, reflective thinking, and basic literacy practices such as handwriting or reading physical books.

The presentation then addresses 2025 findings on teens, social media, and AI chatbots, highlighting concerns that increased AI use in academic settings is linked with more non-academic, potentially harmful conversational patterns and reduced feelings of connection. Students using AI more frequently report higher concern and less meaningful engagement, with many of these interactions occurring on school-issued devices.

A broader societal question emerges: What happens when a generation grows up with fractured attention, weakened critical-thinking skills, pervasive loneliness, and an increasing inclination to form relationships with machines? The presentation argues that to navigate this technological era responsibly, educators must return to fundamental questions about the purpose and consequences of technology—again invoking Postman's framework for examining what problems technology solves, what problems it creates, and who is most affected.

The latter portion focuses on envisioning healthier digital environments. It invites educators to imagine schools as places of community, belonging, and connection—spaces that contrast with the "constantly online" noise students experience outside school. It encourages teaching students to think critically about digital life and to navigate it safely and thoughtfully.

The presentation concludes with a call to prioritize human connection, communication, community, and critical thinking. It introduces *The Screen Guardians Program,* described as a digital-wellness and safety curriculum for K–12 students and the adults who support them. The program is framed as a bridge between technology and the essential human relationships that underlie healthy learning. The closing question

challenges the audience to reflect on their own legacy as educators and leaders in a digital age.

*Board member Mrs. Potter arrived at 4:00 p.m.

Act on recommendations of the Professional Practices Commission (PPC)
R. Scott Gordon, General Counsel, KSDE
Mr. Ricardo Sanchez, Chair PPC

*Mr. Porter recused himself prior to the PPC cases because he had a conflict of interest

Mrs. Haas moved that the Kansas State Board of Education adopt the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and take action as recommended by the Professional Practices Commission in the following cases:, 25-PPC-09, 25-PPC-03, and 24-PPC-23. Mrs. Arnold seconded. Motion carried 9-0 (Mr. Porter was recused).

Mrs. Haas moved that the Kansas State Board of Education adopt the findings of fact, conclusions of law, and take action as recommended by the Professional Practices Commission in the following cases:, 24-PPC-26 and 25-PPC-11. Mrs. Arnold seconded. Motion carried 7-2 with Mrs. O'Brien and Mrs. Potter voting no (Mr. Porter) was recused).

*Mr. Porter came back to the Board table.

Beloit School District experience with cell phone policy
Casey Seyfert, Principal
Jeff Travis, Superintendent
They began with no phones at lunch in 2022. They began a warning system and worked through some various issues. The local School Board passed policy in June, letters were sent to the parents over the summer, and in the fall 2023 they began using *Yonder* bags. Teachers were supportive. They had to learn to watch their own use of their phones.

The climate has changed. The school is loud and everyone is communicating. They go to the library and play chess, checkers, and students are learning to speak on the phone. The kids do not hide in the bathroom anymore. The number of students signing out at 12:30 are very few, down 75% percent. Kids are more engaged. They do not want to miss anything. The average library book check out rose by 20%. There is a reading class that is immensely popular.

Emergency calls can be made from the Principal's office. The kids love the policy because they do not have to deal with phones and social media. Chronic absenteeism was 9% prior to Covid, then in 2022 it was 25%, now it is at 14%. There was only one incident of cyberbullying while on a bus. Our kids are genuinely happy. They like to come to school. They have friends and connections.

Executive Session

Vice Chair Zeck moved that the Board go into Executive Session for the following purpose(s):

1. To discuss personnel matters of nonelected personnel, in order to protect the privacy interests of the individual(s) to be discussed [and/or]

2. To consult with an attorney which would be deemed privileged in the Attorney-Client relationship, in order to protect the privilege and the Board's communications with its attorney on legal matters.

The executive session will last no longer than 20 minutes and no action will be taken during this executive session. The following person(s) are invited to join this executive session: Scott Gordon, Mark Ferguson and Dr. Watson. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

After the Executive Session, the meeting was recessed until the following morning at 9 a.m.

Kansas State Board of Education
Wednesday, February 11, 2026

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.

Overview of the 2026 Legislative Session
Dr. Frank Harwood, Deputy Commissioner
Gabrielle Hull, Legislative Coordinator

- The session is on day 27 and extremely active, with 563 bills introduced and 990 bills currently in committee.
- Turnaround is February 19.

<u>KSSD and KSSB Budget Updates</u>
House K-12 Budget Proposals

- Salary increases for employees at both the Kansas School for the Blind (KSSB) and the Kansas School for the Deaf (KSSD).
- Roof replacements and capital improvement increases.
- Approval for purchase of an accessible vehicle for KSSB.
- Restored a 1.5% lapse.
- Added language allowing both schools to use school district procurement processes instead of state agency processes.

Senate Education Proposals

- Added six contract days and salary increases for both schools for FY26 and FY27.
- Funding for roof replacement, facility remodels, and demolition projects.

<u>KSDE Budget Updates</u>
House K-12 Budget

- 3% CPI-U increase to SGF funding.
- Additional $10M for Special Education.
- Funding for mentor teachers, professional development, National Board Certification, E-Rate match, and outside agencies.
- Pre-K Pilot fully funded via TANF.

<u>Senate Education Budget</u>

- Same 3% CPI-U increase.

- $5M for Special Education.
- Pre-K Pilot funded through TANF.

House Bills of Interest

The presentation highlights a large number of House bills. Major themes include:

School Staffing & Employment

- HB 2411: Shortens waiting period for KPERS retirants returning to schools.

Parental Rights & Student Services

- HB 2420: Requires parental consent for school-based mental-health services; includes civil penalties.
- HB 2710: Creates an "affirming parental rights act."

Technology, Communication, and Social Media

- HB 2421 / SB 302: Restricts student use of personal devices during school hours and limits employee-student communication on social media.

Curriculum & Instruction Requirements

- HB 2576 (Erin's Law): Requires training and student instruction on identifying and reporting child sexual abuse.
- HB 2660: Modifies literacy education and reporting requirements.

School Nutrition

- HB 2637: Requires schools to consider participating in the Community Eligibility Provision.
- HB 2656: Creates the "No Kid Hungry" school meal reimbursement program.

Safety, Discipline & School Climate

- HB 2673: Establishes the Positive Learning Environment Act, addressing teacher rights and student discipline.

Scholarship & Tax Credit Programs

- HB 2468/SB 386 and HB 2680: Expand low-income scholarship tax credit programs.

Other Topics Noted

- Kindergarten readiness (toilet training), fentanyl education, literacy prep changes, compulsory attendance age change, Holocaust education, property tax measures, and more.

Senate Bills of Interest

The Senate bills focus on curriculum, school operations, assessment, rights, and regulation.

Curriculum Requirements

- SB 381: Requires instruction on communism/socialism and mandates a civics exam for graduation.
- SB 420: Requires Holocaust education grades 6–12.

School Operations & Student Programs

- SB 339: Requires 30 minutes of daily recess for K–5 (expanded to K–8 + daily physical activity).
- SB 382: Requires virtual schools to proctor assessments for their virtual students.

Special Education & Teacher Programs

- SB 383: Expands definition of "special teacher" to include third-party contractors.
- SB 440: Special education teacher training pilot program.

Student Rights & Expression

- SB 421: Allows students and clubs to engage in protected speech at school; creates civil action for violations.

Accountability & Oversight

- SB 491: Establishes an Office of Education Inspector General; mandates reporting misconduct; creates a misconduct registry.

Receive contract with Logicalis services to implement Microsoft Power BI platform
Ryan Kurtenbach, Director, IT
Kelly Chanay, Director, Child Nutrition and Wellness

The presentation outlines a request for a contract with Logicalis to train KSDE staff in order to implement a variety of tasks, including work on the Child Nutrition and Wellness Summer food programs. The initiative centers on implementing Microsoft Fabric with Power BI to strengthen data infrastructure and enhance analytical capacity. The planned work includes developing a comprehensive solution design, installing a data gateway, configuring necessary data extractions, mapping program metrics, and building Power BI reports and dashboards. Final deliverables will include complete documentation and a fully developed reporting environment. By modernizing data systems, the department aims to transform raw information into insights that can guide decision-making and support program improvement efforts across Kansas.

This work is funded in part through a USDA non-competitive technology grant, which encourages the use of analytical tools to support data-informed program management. The technology initiative is designed to help create a stronger framework for technical assistance, enabling administrators and program operators to make better use of available information.

Several practical applications are highlighted, such as enhancing the "Locate a Site Near You" tool for summer meals, improving participation and financial management reporting, and strengthening connections between child nutrition program operators and local food producers. Collectively, these projects reflect a broader effort to leverage modern technology to better serve children, families, and communities across the state.

Cybersecurity at the district level
Dr. Harwood, Deputy Commissioner
Ryan Kurtenbach, Director, IT

The presentation provides an overview of cybersecurity issues, needs, and ongoing efforts within Kansas school districts. It begins by highlighting that while the *Safe and Secure Schools Grant Program* once provided matching funds for improving school safety, it was not funded for the 2025–2026 year and did not include cybersecurity expenditures even when active. This leaves districts without designated resources to strengthen their cyber protections. In contrast, the Kansas State Department of Education must follow statewide cybersecurity requirements as a state agency, while individual school districts currently have no mandated cybersecurity requirements.

The presentation then describes ongoing work to build stronger partnerships across the state. KSDE collaborates with the Office of Information Technology Services, the Kansas Information Security Office, the Cybersecurity Collaboration and Preparedness program, and school districts. Seven presentations across multiple conferences and service centers, along with a panel discussion, have supported these efforts to share knowledge and build consistent expectations for cybersecurity improvements.
To guide these initiatives, Kansas has adopted the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) 2.0 as the official statewide framework. The legislature selected this model, and it is also used by auditors to evaluate system performance. The framework is valued because it offers a flexible, prioritized, repeatable, and cost-effective structure for strengthening cybersecurity capabilities. It organizes cybersecurity practices into five core functions—Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover—with an overarching "Govern" function that provides policy, oversight, and strategic direction.

The presentation expands on these categories by giving concrete examples of what each entails for school districts. Identification includes asset inventories, system documentation, risk assessments, and penetration testing. Protection covers essential safeguards such as network segmentation, endpoint security, remote access controls, and data backup processes. Detection emphasizes monitoring tools and exposure management, while response involves incident procedures, communication plans, and reporting. Recovery focuses on planning, analysis, communication, and after-action work. Governance includes policy development, roles and responsibilities, cybersecurity planning, vendor assessments, and risk tolerance decisions—all essential for sustaining a secure environment.

The final section introduces a collaborative platform intended to support continuous improvement. This shared space will offer secure document storage, cybersecurity guidance, templates, contract and RFP language, forums, news updates, and

opportunities for districts to share assessments and resources with one another. The presentation concludes with contact information for KSDE leaders responsible for cybersecurity and technology support.

Approve Innovative Assessment Pilot with the Olathe District
Dr. Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services
Tim Reves, Chief Academic Officer
Spencer Brown, Assistant Director, Assessment and Accountability
The presentation outlines Kansas's ongoing effort to strengthen the relationship between assessment and instruction by leveraging an innovative assessment model currently being explored with district partners, including Olathe. The work originated in March 2024, when the Board identified a need to improve assessment practices, reduce unnecessary testing, and ensure stronger alignment with high-quality instructional materials. After allocating resources to investigate solutions, the state partnered with Innovative Assessment Solutions to refine assessment design, improve data usability, and tighten alignment between district benchmarks and state proficiency standards.

Findings from this initial work confirmed that current curriculum-aligned benchmark assessments already measure key standards in depth and closely correlate with state summative results. This dual alignment shows benchmarks can serve both instructional and accountability purposes. Because districts currently administer both benchmarks and state summatives, a major opportunity is to eliminate this double testing by using benchmarks for federal accountability under the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA). This would allow teachers to rely on assessments that are embedded in curriculum, instructionally relevant, and more useful for immediate feedback.

Six districts are already testing this model, and Kansas intends to apply for IADA authority, which would allow a multi-year pilot with federal approval. Under IADA, innovative assessments can replace traditional statewide summative tests for accountability while maintaining compliance with state and federal requirements. The presentation emphasizes a broader vision in which assessment is seamlessly integrated into teaching and learning. Rather than treating learning as a one-time event measured by a single end-of-year score, the system would treat learning as a process. Meaningful examples illustrate how summative scores often fail to convey what students actually know, while curriculum-embedded assessments can provide clearer, more actionable insights about student progress. Teachers, parents, and students all benefit from frequent, instructionally aligned feedback rather than opaque, after-the-fact results.

The materials also highlight the importance of distinguishing between formative and summative purposes, using clear visuals and examples showing how current misunderstandings can distort the value of assessment data. Demonstrations of student work, proficiency thresholds, and concept-learning sequences underscore how benchmarks better capture real learning trajectories.

Data presented from Olathe shows strong alignment between benchmark scores and state summative performance across multiple grades, supporting the validity of using benchmarks as an accountability measure. Comparisons of ability scales and path models further illustrate how the benchmark system explains a large share of variance in state assessment outcomes.

The presentation situates this assessment approach within the state's "Four Fundamentals": Structured Literacy, Balanced Assessment, Standards Alignment, and High-Quality Instruction. Each fundamental reinforces the idea that effective assessment should be closely tied to evidence-based instruction, coherent standards, meaningful engagement, and timely data that supports differentiation.

Finally, the presentation underscores that this work is still a pilot, but one with strong promise. The goal is to give parents clearer information about their children's learning, give educators timely feedback that strengthens instruction, and give students a more coherent pathway to mastering academic standards. The overarching message is that Kansas is positioned to modernize its assessment system by integrating accountability with instruction rather than separating the two.

Receive Business Education Content Standards Recommendations
Dr. Catherine Chmidling, Teacher Licensure
Virtual: Sarah Sweet, Teacher, Emporia High School
Virtual: Kim Dhority, Dean, Flint Hills Technical College

This presentation provides an overview of the revised Business Education grades 6–12 preparation standards used by higher education programs to develop, monitor, and redesign educator preparation pathways. It begins by explaining the purpose of program standards, which guide institutions in ensuring that teacher candidates acquire the knowledge and skills demanded of modern educators. It outlines the two major types of standards—professional education standards that focus on core teaching competencies applicable across disciplines, and content program standards that address subject-specific knowledge and abilities.

The presentation then introduces the newly updated Business Education preparation standards, explaining that the revisions include updated language and a reorganization of elements to better reflect current expectations in the field. For each of the eight

original standards, the presentation compares the former version with the newly proposed standard and highlights what has changed.

Across the revisions, several themes emerge. Many standards were modernized to incorporate digital literacy, data analytics, emerging technologies, and the evolving nature of business careers. Several standards shifted toward greater emphasis on pedagogy, including curriculum development based on state competencies, competency-based instruction, assessment design, and the use of diverse instructional strategies in varied environments such as classrooms, labs, and simulated workplace settings.

Other revisions center on strengthening teacher candidates' professional attributes, such as engagement in continuous learning, self-reflection, collaboration, and effective communication with colleagues, students, and families. In addition, much of the former content was consolidated into a comprehensive content-knowledge standard that now encompasses key areas of business education such as accounting, finance, economics, information technology, marketing, and management.

The presentation concludes by noting that the revised program standards will be formally presented as an action item in March 2026 and provides contact information for the leaders overseeing teacher licensure.

Receive Regulations/Rules Review
Shane Carter, Director, Teacher Licensure
R. Scott Gordon, General Counsel
Dr. Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services
The presentation provides an overview of proposed updates to Kansas educator licensure regulations, along with the rationale behind the changes and a review of both previously approved modifications and new items being considered.

It begins by grounding the work in *State Board of Education Goal #3,* which focuses on policy, regulation, and alignment. The proposed revisions aim to better align licensure with the Kansas School Improvement Model, improve the relevance and quality of professional learning, eliminate outdated or redundant requirements, and support school districts in meeting their licensure and staffing needs more efficiently.
The presentation identifies several regulations impacted by the review, including those covering licensure definitions, types, endorsements, general requirements, out-of-state applicants, renewal processes, and additional endorsements. It then revisits changes that have already been approved. These include the creation of a "Legacy License," a twenty-year credential for retired educators who remain eligible to teach full-time or substitute; new emergency substitute licensure pathways that require completion of

state-approved training modules and verification of hire; the removal of the Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) test, deemed duplicative; and the establishment of a Computer Science endorsement.

New items for consideration include adding a renewal pathway aligned with the Kansas School Improvement Model. Under this approach, educators would be able to renew their licenses by completing State Board-approved training programs during their license period. A substantial portion of the presentation details the proposed list of state-approved training options. These include programs focused on professional development, content knowledge, application, and impact.

Specific training offerings include LETRS for early childhood, elementary, and administrative educators; AIM Pathways; various "Pathways to Proficient Reading" tracks; Keys to Literacy, including Keys to Beginning Reading; Kansas Board of Regents' courses on the science of reading; programs offered by the Phillips Fundamental Learning Center; and leadership development programs such as Elevate Leadership through the United School of Administrators–Kansas.

Further recommendations address license duration adjustments to improve consistency and processing efficiency. Proposed changes include converting all Emergency Substitute Licenses to a two-year license, extending the Initial Teaching License to four years, and standardizing both Temporary Nonrenewable and Transitional Licenses to one calendar year.

The presentation also introduces a proposal to remove the "Recency" requirement for licensure, which currently requires applicants to have recent accredited teaching experience or recent coursework. The presenters note that many individuals' seeking reinstatement already have the necessary experience, while others end up taking an inconsistent assortment of courses that may not align with teaching responsibilities or content endorsements.

Parent Highlight: Celebrating Kansas' High Quality *Parents as Teachers* home visiting programs

Amanda Peterson, Director, Early Childhood
Lisa Williams, *Parents as Teachers*
Amanda McGuire, Beloit District
Nicole Farley, Topeka District

Summary of the Presentation

This presentation highlights the role of Kansas' high-quality Parents as Teachers (PAT) home visiting programs in supporting early literacy and strengthening families. It opens by emphasizing the importance of the earliest years of life: over 90% of a child's brain

develops before age five, and rapid neural connections form every second during this period. Because families are children's first and most influential teachers, evidence-based early childhood programs like Parents as Teachers play an essential role in promoting school readiness and long-term success.

The PAT model is built on four core components—personal visits, group connections, resource networks, and child and caregiver screenings. Programs must meet rigorous standards to maintain fidelity to the model or earn Blue Ribbon status, and the presentation recognizes a long list of Kansas PAT affiliates that have achieved this distinction.

The presentation makes the case for focusing on early literacy by noting three major factors that influence a child's reading success: the value placed on literacy in the home, the amount of time parents spend reading with their child, and the availability of reading materials. When families make reading and conversations about books a natural part of daily life, children develop important competencies such as vocabulary, comprehension, imagination, and broader knowledge about the world.
The core of the presentation outlines eight ways PAT supports families in developing early literacy:

1. Parent Education: Home visitors help parents understand their role as their child's first teacher, modeling literacy-rich interactions and showing how everyday routines build language skills.
2. Modeling Literacy Practices: Visitors demonstrate shared reading strategies, dialogic reading, storytelling, and ways to ask open-ended questions that encourage children's engagement.
3. Language-Rich Environments: Families are supported in using frequent conversation, labeling objects, expanding children's speech, and incorporating print awareness into the home.
4. Developmentally Appropriate Guidance: Activities and strategies are tailored to each child's age and developmental stage, emphasizing foundational literacy skills such as listening, phonological awareness, and comprehension.
5. Book Access: PAT provides books and literacy materials and helps families choose culturally relevant, age-appropriate titles. Programs also encourage consistent reading routines and promote community resources like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
6. Individualized Support: Through observation, home visitors identify developmental strengths and needs, offer early intervention when needed, and connect families to resources like libraries or early childhood programs.

7. Strengthening Parent–Child Relationships: Literacy activities become opportunities for bonding, helping build secure relationships that motivate a child's interest in learning.
8. Ongoing Assessment and Goal Setting: Developmental screenings track growth in communication and literacy skills, and PAT staff partner with families to set goals and adjust strategies over time. In the 2024–2025 year, PAT screenings led to hundreds of referrals for additional assessment and services when needed.

The presentation closes with an invitation for questions and discussion, reinforcing the message that early childhood is a powerful window of opportunity—and that Kansas PAT programs are a key strategy in helping families nurture early literacy and long-term success.

KESA Cohort of Specialized Schools

Dr. Jay Scott, Director, Accreditation and Design

Jay Scott provided an overview of Kansas' Special Purpose Schools and how they fit within the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) framework. It begins by explaining that these schools—though unique in mission, and student population—are required to pursue state accreditation because they serve public school students. The Special Purpose Schools highlighted include Lawrence-Gardner High School, Parsons State Hospital School, Heartspring School, Lakemary Center, the Kansas School for the Blind, and the Kansas School for the Deaf.

Each school serves a highly specialized student population. Lawrence-Gardner High School operates within the juvenile correctional facility in Topeka, offering a Kansas-aligned curriculum, diploma pathways, and GED preparation for youth who are reengaging academically. Parsons State Hospital School serves students who reside permanently at the state hospital and have significant medical, intellectual, and communication needs. Heartspring School in Wichita supports students with complex neurodevelopmental disorders and intensive behavioral and medical needs, many of whom are non-verbal and attend from across the nation. Lakemary Center provides education within a psychiatric residential treatment setting, working with students who have intellectual disabilities or autism paired with psychiatric diagnoses. The Kansas School for the Blind and the Kansas School for the Deaf both serve children from birth to age 21 through on-campus programs and extensive statewide outreach services. The presentation then outlines how KESA accreditation has evolved for these schools. Under KESA 1.0 (2017–2023), Special Purpose Schools were expected to meet the same reporting requirements and student outcome measures as all other districts, despite their unique contexts and fully exceptional student populations. In contrast, KESA 2.0 (2024 to present) maintains rigorous standards but with expectations that are more relevant and appropriate for these specialized settings. The action plan and

compliance standards remain aligned with statewide expectations, but work is now underway to establish an alternative graduation metric that better reflects the diverse pathways and needs of students served in these environments.

Update from the search firm Hazard, Young, & Attea Associates (HYA)
Frank Henderson, in person
Virtual: Max McGee
Virtual: Mike Richie
Frank Henderson gave the report in person; the leadership report is done and now the recruiting has begun. The typical pattern is that most applicants apply at the last minutes. February 17th is the deadline. March 3rd is the sharing of the slate of candidates, in person, at a Special Board Meeting.

Committee Reports:
Beryl New: Master Teachers selection in Emporia.
Dennis Hershberger: Ag in the Classroom quarterly meeting.
No meetings of the KSD superintendent search committee yet.
Cathy Hopkins: Teacher Vacancy Committee reviewed the teacher retention study.
Melanie Haas: Invited the entire board to lunch next month at the Capitol with the Volunteer commission.

Need one member to be on the school lunch review committee. Meets annually.
Need to appoint the Kansas State High School Activities Association positions (2) for the coming year.

Board Travel Requests:
Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education accept the travel requests made by the Board members. Mrs. Dombrosky seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Future Item Requests:
Mrs. Arnold: Board looks at professional development for others, and she would like to have the Board have some of its own professional development.

Mr. Hershberger: Would like to see Nathan McAlister lead up a celebration in 250th anniversary. Kansas Materials data collection draft report (December 2025) sciences courses are not rated, does not meet standard.

Mr. Porter: The religious schools need some support from the Board.

Vice Chair Zeck: Concerned about curriculum. Wants more information in general.

Board Comments

Chair Hopkins handed out the Citizen's Forum policy, in response to Mrs. Arnold's motion at the beginning of Tuesday.
Each member had one minute to share their thoughts on the policy.

- Mrs. Arnold feels Board members are not general public. Forum only for general public.
- Mrs. Haas stated Board members are not public and should not participate in citizen's forum.
- Mr. Zeck stated that Board members need to have board member comments and need to use that to express thoughts.
- Mrs. Dombrosky agreed that the Board comments at the end of the meeting are the time for a member to speak.
- Dr. New stated this is a good opportunity for the new members to understand the use of the Citizen's Forum. The Board is one unit, and citizens are individuals.
- Mr. Hershberger feels strongly about protecting the general public from having their time being taken by Board members. Likes the idea to share at the end of the meeting.
- Mrs. Potter appreciates Vice Chair Zeck's comments to use the end of the meeting. She has experienced being interrupted and she wants to have time to express herself. If she is having that Board comment time – she wants to have it uninterrupted, with questions only for clarification.
- Mr. Porter is uncomfortable with Board members using the Citizen's Forum. He noted that each speaker should focus on education topics. The Chair needs the ability to stop anything inappropriate.
- Mrs. O'Brien feels that Board members should speak at the end of the meeting.

Board Attorney Ferguson is going to circulate a case Gilmore vs. Beverage. This is a limited public forum. This area has been heavily litigated. He feels the policy could be changed slightly.

Mrs. Potter feels the *letters of concern* were not associated with a violation of policy.

Mr. Hershberger moved that the Kansas State Board of Education clarify that the agenda item named the *Citizens Open Forum* is specifically for the general public only and not for Board members. Mrs. Arnold seconded. Motion carried 9-1. With Mrs. Potter voting no.

Mr. Hershberger moved that the meeting be adjourned until March. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

The meeting was adjourned until the Special Board meeting on March 3, 2026.

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Chair Cathy Hopkins Board Secretary Deborah Bremer

Note: Some of the presentation summaries were developed using Copilot (AI tool).