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

Kansas State Board of Education
Tuesday, January 13, 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, January 13, 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

All the Board members were present:
(listed alphabetically by last name)
Mrs. Betty Arnold
Mrs. Michelle Dombrosky (virtually present)
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.

MINUTES

(NOVEMBER MINUTES) Mr. Porter moved to approved the minutes for the November 12 & 13, 2025, Kansas State Board of Education meeting and the minutes for the November 18, 2025, Kansas State Board of Education *Special* meeting. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-0-1 with Mrs. Potter present not voting.

(DECEMBER MINUTES) Mrs. Haas moved to approve the minutes for December 9 & 10, 2025 minutes and the minutes for December 16, 2025, Kansas State Board of Education *Special* meeting. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-0-1 with Mrs. Potter present not voting.

AGENDA

Mrs. Haas moved to approve the agenda for January 13 & 14, 2026. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Dombrosky removed e and l for a separate vote.
Mr. Porter moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-3 with Mr. Zeck, Mrs. Potter and Mrs. O'Brien voting no.

Consent Agenda items approved:

Notified of Monthly personnel report
Act on Recommendations of the Licensure Review Committee
Act on Local Professional Development Plans
Act on Recommendations for Licensure Waivers
Act on request to hold a bond election:
USD 417 Morris County, Morris County
USD 407 Russell County, Russell County
USD 340 Jefferson West, Jefferson County
USD 322 Onaga-Havensville-Wheaton,
Pottawatomie County
USD 270 Plainville, Rooks County
USD 353 Wellington, Sumner County
USD 469 Lansing, Leavenworth County
USD 418 McPherson, McPherson County
USD 482 Dighton, Lane County
USD 232 DeSoto, Johnson County
USD 404 Riverton, Cherokee County
Act on request to receive Capitol Improvement (Bond and Interest) State Aid
USD 417 Morris County, Morris County
USD 407 Russell County, Russell County
USD 340 Jefferson West, Jefferson County
USD 322 Onaga-Havensville-Wheaton,
Pottawatomie County
USD 379 Clay County, Clay County
USD 270 Plainville, Rooks County
USD 353 Wellington, Sumner County
USD 469 Lansing, Leavenworth County
USD 418 McPherson, McPherson County
USD 482 Dighton, Lane County
USD 232 DeSoto, Johnson County
USD 404 Riverton, Cherokee County
Act on the Disorganization of *Southern Cloud* District
Act to approve negotiation between Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD) and Kansas National

Education Association (KNEA)
Receive TCLISSP Notification of intent to participate for Saint Boniface Academy & the Center for Behavioral/Academic Research (both in Wichita)

Consent Item e. and Consent Item i.
Mr. Porter moved that consent item e (Act to approve three new members for the Special Education Advisory Council) and i (Act on ESSER Liquidation, LTRS contract) be approved. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-1-2 with Mrs. O'Brien voting no and Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Dombrosky present not voting.

Commissioner's Report
Dr. Randy Watson

Dr. Watson
10:00

The presentation provides an overview of Board membership, reinforces the State Board's strategic goals, and highlights ongoing leadership, engagement, and planning priorities for the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE).

The presentation includes a visual map of the Kansas State Board of Education districts, identifying each of the ten sitting Board members along with their district assignments and KSDE email addresses. This section emphasizes statewide representation and accessibility of Board leadership across all districts in Kansas.

Several slides reference Stephen Covey, signaling a thematic focus on leadership principles and habits that support effective governance, organizational culture, and continuous improvement. While these slides are primarily visual, they underscore the Board's emphasis on leadership development and values-based decision-making.

A central portion of the presentation outlines the Kansas State Board of Education Goals for August 2025 through December 2026. These goals are organized into three primary focus areas:

- Quality School Improvement, with an emphasis on the four fundamentals of school improvement through the KESA process;
- Quality Leadership Development, fostering high expectations and equitable access to grade-level instruction and standards; and
- Policy, Regulation, and Alignment, aimed at eliminating and aligning policies to better support student success and reduce system complexity.

To support these goals, the presentation describes methods, lead indicators, and measures of progress designed to ensure consistent implementation and accountability. Key strategies include intentional Board meeting planning and agenda alignment, regular reporting from the Commissioner, KSDE staff, and educators, and ongoing communication through weekly Friday Notes that share research and learning

resources aligned with Board priorities.

The presentation also highlights the importance of educator and community engagement, encouraging Board members to actively seek opportunities to connect with educators and community members across Kansas. These engagements are positioned as critical to understanding how Board goals are implemented at the local level and to informing continuous improvement efforts statewide.

Finally, the presentation references the search for a new Superintendent at the Kansas School for the Deaf, indicating a significant leadership transition and reinforcing the Board's role in guiding and supporting this process. The presentation concludes with a continued emphasis on leadership principles, accountability, and alignment in advancing the State Board's mission and goals.

Citizen's Open Forum

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

Steve Roberts: Private Citizen and former Kansas State Board of Education member. Mr. Robert recommended the book *A Conflict of Visions* by Thomas Sowell. He also announced that he would be running in the next election for the District 3 Board seat.

Jason Gillispe: Private Citizen, Parent. Urged the Board to give clear statewide guidance for ABA policy in schools. He has a son who has greatly benefitted from ABA therapy in the classroom. He brought a handout for the Board to read.

Lori Kopp: Lawyer with Kansas Association of State Boards. Her legal opinion is that the proposed guidance on ABA is not adequate. She urged the Board to postpone issuing this guidance and work further on refining the message.

Erica Sheets: Citizen, Parent of two special needs children who have now finished their education, Moms for Liberty representative. She expressed her thoughts on ABA therapy. She feels no vote is needed because it is therapy, not education. It is a valuable intervention but not appropriate for the classroom, rather it should be used in a private setting.

Nancy Moneymaker: Citizen, Parent and Grandparent. Based on 10 years of data, she has concluded that when school treats the "whole child" it takes away from education. She believes school should focus on education. If medical services are needed, those should be left to the medical field.

Dr. Kylie Stewart: Professor of Special Education in Pittsburg, mother of a student who attends Kansas School for the Deaf (KSD). She is concerned about the teacher shortage. One out of four KSD teachers are actually licensed and this is partly because of the unique licensure requirements in Kansas. She believes KSD needs tuition dollars and to think outside the box with paraprofessionals. KSD must work with licensure at KSDE, looking at tuition funding in TASN and actionable opportunities.

Sharon Knewtson: Parent of child at KSD. Sharon asked that in the overall report from the KSD Task Force that the administrator and parent recommendations be added. She noted there are ten open positions and that KSD needs more proactive efforts to find teachers. She suggested the Board/Commissioner contact Larry Finn who teaches American Sign Language at KU to consult and reach out to training institutions to recruit.

Zack Winch: Parent of child at KSD. He supports American Sign Language as irreplaceable to the intellectual development of deaf students. As the search begins for the new KSD superintendent, he recommends the qualities needed are: strong administrative skills, ability to act as change agent with literacy issues, and he feels the superintendent does not need to be a deaf person. KSD is a cultural institution, but it is fundamentally an educational agency which serves both deaf students and those who are hard of hearing, non-verbal, or have cochlear implants. Deaf students need to be prepared to be successful in the hearing world and this means they must have strong skills in written language. Written language is the link between the deaf and non-deaf world.

Nick Compagnone: Representing Kansas Association of Religious Schools (KAIRS). He invited the Board to the KAIRS Conference to be held on February 9-10. He shared the agenda with the Board. In particular the Board is invited to the Monday night banquet which will honor the finest teachers in the religious schools across the state.

Mrs. Potter came to the podium.

There was a discussion about whether Board members are allowed to speak during Citizen's Forum, according to Board policy. The Board Attorney expressed that the purpose of the Citizen's Forum is not for Board members to express personal opinions, however, he doesn't feel it is worth to draw a legal challenge to this particular issue. If the Board wants to modify its policies to make this clear that would be a possible choice in future.

Debby Potter: Board member. She addressed the issue of making a public records request, which was made by Katie Vandergriend, who asked for all written

communications including emails, letters and text messages concerning letters given to Debby Potter by Board Attorney Mark Ferguson on December 18, 2025. The date range she requested was between July -December. Mark Ferguson responded in writing by saying these communications are protected by Attorney/Client communication. Mrs. Potter feels she is included in that protected group and should have access to all that communication that is about her. She demands that she receive these communications immediately. Mr. Ferguson did not respond in the required time for a public records request (3 days). She feels this is an example of his incompetence and acting in bad faith. She referred to asking the Board attorney for his resignation.

At this point Mr. Porter interrupted with a Point of Order, saying there should be no personal comments and that has been violated. Mrs. Potter returned to her seat.

The Chair closed the Citizen's Forum.

Task Force for School Improvement at the Kansas School for the Deaf

KSD Task Force 1:01:00

Lisa Karney, KSDE, Chairperson for the Task Force

Membership of Task Force

- State Board Members
    - Melanie Haas
    - Dr. Beryl New
    - Michelle Dombrosky
- Kansas School for the Deaf parent representatives
    - Dr. Kylie Stewart
    - Zach Wentz
    - Sharon Knewtson
- Kansas School for the Deaf Administrators
    - Luanne Barron
    - Molly Rothwell
    - Ben Cardon
- Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Liaison
    - Lisa Karney

Task Force Recommendations

- Reading and Math
    - Appropriate instruction methodology for deaf students.
- KESA Strategic Plan
    - Incorporating or looking to Conference of Educational Administrators of School and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) work.
- Transition Goals and Focus
    - After graduation
- Teacher Pipeline and Retention
    - Review/revise Deaf Education licensure, particularly in comparison to other states, as well as accreditation for Kansas higher education.
- KSDE Role
    - Update KSDE website
        - Make parent resources more accessible.
        - Elevate parents' rights.
        - IEP information.
        - Families Together.
- Establish standing Parent Advisory Council
    - Council of parents, teachers, building leaders, and state board members.

It was noted that the report should include the administrator and parent recommendations.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the recommendations of the Kansas School for the Deaf Task Force as presented, including the subset of the administrator and parent recommendations, with a timeline expectation that action will be taken immediately. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

R.I.S.E Helping Students Become Classroom Ready
Kelsey Sciacca, Principal, Park Elementary School
Carmen Zeisler, ESSDACK Service Center

RISE
12:24:25

The presentation introduces the R.I.S.E. Program, an innovative approach designed to help students who are not classroom-ready or who might otherwise face out-of-school suspension. The program focuses on on-campus behavioral wellness and school discipline, aiming to keep students engaged in learning while addressing behavioral challenges.

The challenge highlighted is the growing prevalence of disruptive and unsafe behaviors among elementary students, which often leads to suspensions without providing additional support. This cycle results in lagging skills, fractured relationships between school and home, and burnout for both students and teachers.

To address these issues, the R.I.S.E. Program emphasizes Relationships, Instruction, Safety, and Emotional well-being. It serves as an alternative to suspension and as a Tier 3 behavioral intervention. The program teaches strategies for classroom success, responsibility, and accountability within the school community.
The structure of R.I.S.E. is leveled and self-contained, with progression based on student needs:

- Level 0: Take a Breath
- Level 1: Connection & Safety
- Level 2: Brain Awareness and Learning
- Level 3: Preparing Brains and Bodies for the Classroom
- Level 4: Transitioning Back to the Classroom

Throughout the program, students engage in academics, brain-awareness lessons, service projects, small group interventions, and restorative practices. Emotional check-ins and accountability are central components. The presentation also outlines criteria for candidates, the Student of Concern process, and the importance of team building among staff. Educators receive training to strengthen Tier 1 supports, focusing on brain science, restorative practices, and dignity-based approaches.

The ultimate goal of R.I.S.E. is to keep students in school, help them build internal strengths, and successfully reintegrate them into their classrooms. The program has shown promising results: of 13 students served, most have not repeated behaviors, and success stories include dramatic improvements in attendance and engagement. Finally, the presentation underscores the importance of collaboration between R.I.S.E. staff, schools, and families, as well as community partnerships. The message closes with a powerful reminder: every student deserves a chance to rewrite their story and change their path.

Update: Legislative Report

Dr. Frank Harwood, Deputy Commissioner, Fiscal and Administrative Services

Legislative Report 3:34:00

Session Overview

- The 2026 Kansas Legislative Session began on January 12 and is currently in its second day of a 90-day session.
- This is the second year of the biennium, meaning bills introduced last year remain active.
- For education-related legislation:
    - 68 carryover bills from last year.
    - 11 new bills introduced for 2026.

Key Legislative Dates

- Jan 12 – Session begins
- Feb 4 – Last day for individual legislator bill introduction
- Feb 6 – Last day for non-exempt committee bill introduction
- Feb 19 – Turnaround Day (last day to consider bills in chamber of origin)
- March 27 – First Adjournment
- April 11 – Sine Die (final adjournment)

Carryover Bills Passed Out of Committee

- SB 48 – School District Accreditation: Requires districts to demonstrate academic improvement and comply with state statutes for accreditation.
- SB 49 – School Boards: Needs assessment requirements; board members receive state assessment data; identify allocations or reallocations in budgets.
- SB 75 – Education Opportunity Tax Credit: Refundable tax credit for families with children not enrolled in public schools.
- SB 263 – Standards for active shooter drills in public and accredited nonpublic schools.
- HB 2104 – Standardizing firearm safety programs in school districts.

- SB 47 – Transparency and governance changes for local school boards (public comment requirements, agenda additions, access to school property, and dues payment authorization).

Carryover Bills Passed by a Chamber

- HB 2164 – Prohibits certain sex offenders from entering school property or attending school activities; includes criminal penalties.
- HB 2034 – Authorizes school districts to employ or accept volunteer chaplains; prohibits certain individuals from serving as chaplains.
- HB 2203 – Defines "other health impairment" to include fetal alcohol syndrome disorder.

New Bills for 2026

- HB 2409 – Prohibits starting school before Labor Day.
- HB 2411 – Reduces waiting period for rehiring KPERS retirees in teaching positions.
- HB 2412 – Increases penalties for child endangerment if the child is under six years old.
- HB 2415 – Requires local boards to appoint a nonvoting student representative.
- HB 2420 – Requires parental consent for school-based mental health services; establishes exceptions and civil penalties for violations.
- HB 2431 – Establishes a student secular bill of rights to protect against religious coercion and discrimination in public schools.
- HB 2421 & SB 302 – Restrict student use of personal electronic devices during school hours; prohibit staff-student communication via social media for official purposes.
- SB 315 & HB 2434 – Appropriations for fiscal years ending June 30, 2026, 2027, and 2028.

At-Risk Accountability Plans

- Originated from House Sub for SB 387 (K.S.A. 72-3574).
- Starting in 2026–2027, districts must:
    - Designate two student cohorts.
    - Set four-year quantitative goals.
    - Identify interventions and track progress.

- Currently in year two of a pilot with 11 districts; integration with KESA is underway.
- Proposed Changes:
    - Change required cohort from 3rd grade to 4th grade for better goal setting.
    - Remove Free Lunch cohort requirement due to federal privacy rules.
    - Clarify goal requirements (ELA or Math per cohort instead of both).

Dyslexia
4:06:25

Presentation "Dyslexia Initiatives: Policy to Practice
Dr. Laurie Curtis
KSDE Dyslexia and Early Literacy Program Manager

The presentation focuses on Kansas' efforts to implement structured literacy practices and dyslexia initiatives, bridging policy and classroom practice. It begins by situating these efforts within the Science of Reading, a body of research from neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and education that informs effective reading instruction and intervention. This science explains why some students struggle and how educators can address these challenges through evidence-based teaching and assessment strategies.

A key concept introduced is the reading rope model, which illustrates how skilled reading depends on multiple interwoven components. When weaknesses occur—especially in phonological processing and decoding—students may exhibit characteristics of dyslexia. Dyslexia is described as a language-based disorder involving difficulty with speech sounds and the written code.
The presentation emphasizes the urgency of addressing reading struggles, noting that only about 40% of Kansas students are currently being reached effectively. It critiques outdated approaches such as the three-cueing system and balanced literacy, which rely on visual and contextual guessing rather than systematic decoding. Research using eye-tracking and fMRI has clarified that reading is not intuitive but a rapid, complex neurological process, reinforcing the need for explicit, code-based instruction.

Kansas' approach includes universal screening three times a year from kindergarten through ninth grade. These screeners do not diagnose dyslexia but assess risk and provide benchmarks for analysis. When risk is identified, diagnostic assessments follow to pinpoint specific difficulties and guide targeted

interventions. Flowcharts and protocols ensure consistency in assessment and instructional decision-making.

The framework for success rests on four fundamentals:

1. Structured Literacy
2. Standards Alignment
3. Balanced Assessment
4. Quality Instruction

These priorities are supported by systems for school improvement, professional learning, and high-quality instructional materials. KSDE provides resources such as the Kansas Dyslexia Handbook, screening protocols, observation tools, curriculum guidance, and professional development networks.

Finally, the presentation underscores the importance of highly trained educators, accurate data analysis, and coherent systems to deliver effective literacy instruction. The ultimate goal is to provide timely, intensive support for students at risk, ensuring equitable access to reading success across Kansas schools.

Act to approve language for $25,000 threshold amount in contracts to be approved by the Board

Threshold Policy 4:29:27

Mrs. Melanie Haas, District 2 Board Representative
Chair of the Board Policy Committee

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the change for the approval threshold of discretionary grants or contracts that are required to have state board approval from $10,000 to $25,000 and add this to the State Board Policy Manual. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-2-1 with Mrs. Dombrosky and Mrs. Potter voted no, Mrs. O'Brien present not voting.

Superintendent of the Year: Dr. Reginald Eggleston

Eggleston 4:44:25

Dr. Watson introduced the Superintendent of the year who has served the Junction City Area, USD 465 Geary County Schools since 2019.

"Prior to his role in Kansas, he served as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Alabama State Department of Education and has held a range of leadership positions

including Assistant Superintendent, Director of Special Education, Principal, Assistant Principal, and Special Education Teacher. He earned a Bachelor of Science from Troy University, a Master of Education from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, an Educational Specialist degree from Auburn University at Montgomery, and a Doctorate in Education from Nova Southeastern University.

Geary County Schools USD 475 serves the communities of Junction City, Fort Riley, Milford, and Grandview Plaza through 17 schools, offering programs from early childhood through high school. With approximately 50% of its students connected to the military, USD 475 proudly leads Kansas as the first district to implement the Purple Star School Program, supporting the unique needs of military-connected learners. Junction City High School features 15 career pathways, Advanced Placement and dual-credit opportunities, and internship programs designed to prepare students for college and career success. Guided by a five-year Strategic Plan, the district remains focused on academic excellence, student well-being, family engagement, and staff support.

Upon joining Geary County Schools USD 475, Dr. Eggleston led transformative reforms that strengthened equity, transparency, and academic excellence across the district. After data revealed significant disproportionality in suspensions of Black male students with disabilities, he spearheaded the development of a districtwide Code of Conduct, implemented data-driven reviews, and introduced SEL and PBIS frameworks—efforts that resulted in measurable equity gains and removal from federal designation status. At the same time, Dr. Eggleston prioritized open, inclusive communication through community listening sessions, coalition meetings, and video updates, fostering trust and collaboration. His leadership emphasizes equity, professionalism, and fiscal responsibility, balancing community priorities with strategic planning, legislative advocacy, and the pursuit of external funding to expand early childhood education and support staff development.

In addition to more than 30 years in public education, Dr. Eggleston brings over three decades of distinguished military service as a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves. His background in leadership, discipline, and service to others deeply informs his approach to education and community engagement. Under his direction, USD 475 has advanced initiatives addressing students' academic, social, and emotional needs, earned National Blue Ribbon School recognition, and strengthened community partnerships, ensuring equitable opportunities and sustainable success for more than 7,000 students and 1,300 staff members." (From the website www.kansassuperintendents.org)

Dr. Eggleston noted that his staff and family have been wonderful and they are all part of his journey. He started as a special education teacher, then an assistant principal,

high school principal and then he moved into administrative positions, director of special education, assistant superintendent and then to a state position in Alabama of chief administrative officer. His military background has been very helpful serving in Geary County with Ft. Riley. He works hand in hand with his local board of education.

In terms of school leadership development he stated the first thing is to be present; letting people know you are there for them and listening to them. A leader doesn't have to have all the problems, but that you are there with them and you will work with them to find a solution to the problem. In this day and age, he noted, people get paralyzed because they are looking for a 100% solution, and in most of the problems we face, there is no such thing as a 100% fool-proof solution. There is a 60%, 70%, or 80% solution and then we have to work together to manage the rest. If we, as school leaders, can help people with that understanding, then success can be greater. People will be more open to risk and can do great things with the individuals they serve if they understand that nothing will be perfect. If leaders are afraid, things will remain the same. Be present, take risks, and accept that no solution is all encompassing.

Act on Higher Education Standards and Recommendations from the Evaluation Review Committee — Higher Ed Standards 5:04:00

Dr. Catherine Chmidling, Teacher Licensure

Mr. Zeck moved that the language be edited to: "children including those with disabilities and exceptionalities." Mrs. Potter seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-2 with Mr. Porter and Mrs. Haas voting no.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the new educator preparation program standards for Technology and Engineering Education 6-12, and Visually Impaired Education B-3, PreK-12. Dr. New seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education accept the recommendations of the Evaluation Review Committee for program approval for the Kansas Independent College Association. Mrs. O'Brien seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Act on initiating Request for Proposal for the Kansas Integrated and Accountability System (KIAS) — KIAS 5:08:50

Dean Zajic, Assistant Director, Special Education

Mr. Zeck moved that the item be tabled for another month in order to investigate more about the data and how it is used. Mrs. Potter seconded the motion. Motion fails

4-5-1 with Mrs. Haas, Dr. New, Mrs. Hopkins, Mrs. Arnold and Mr. Porter voting no and Mrs. O'Brien present not voting.

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education authorize the Commissioner of Education to initiate the contract bid process to provide maintenance, technical support, and enhancements for the existing Kansas Integrated Accountability System (KIAS) necessary for oversight of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the Kansas Education for Exceptional Children Act for the period of execution through June 30, 2030 in an amount not to exceed $1,000,000 to be funded from ESEA and IDEA funds. Mrs. Haas seconded. 6-2-2 with Mr. Zeck and Mrs. Dombrosky voting no, Mrs. Potter and Mrs. O'Brien present not voting.

Recommendations of the Professional Practices Commission — PPC
R. Scott Gordon, General Counsel — 5:33:25
Mr. Sanchez, Chair of PPC

Mrs. Haas moved that the Kansas State Board of Education suspend the teacher's license for the remainder of the term for such contract was made in the case of 25-PPC-38. Mr. Porter seconded the motion. Motion carried 9-1 with Mrs. Potter voting no.

Act on Medical Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy in school settings guidance — ABA
Brian Dempsey, Assistant Director, Special Education — 6:04:10

Mr. Porter moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approve the proposed guidance on Applied Behavioral Analysis, as presented. Mrs. Arnold seconded the motion. Motion carried 8-2 with Dr. New and Mrs. Dombrosky voting no.

Presentation: AI in Education — AI
Dr. Jake Steel, Office of the Commissioner — 6:25:50

The presentation introduces a learning series on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, emphasizing that understanding AI helps stakeholders make informed decisions about its use. It frames the discussion around foundational policy ideas for AI in education, citing *TeachAI*'s guidelines.

Core Message
The central theme is captured by Stephen Covey's quote: *"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."* The presentation warns against adopting technology for its own sake, urging educators and policymakers to align AI adoption with educational

values and goals rather than trends or status symbols. An anecdote from *The Millionaire Next Door* illustrates the importance of values-driven decisions.

Vision and Mission

The Kansas State Department of Education's vision is to lead the world in the success of each student, achieved through rigorous academics, career training, and character development tailored to individual talents.

Key Topics and Principles

1. AI Spectrum – Encourages reflection on attitudes toward AI (Doomer, Gloomer, Zoomer, Bloomer).
2. Four Guiding Principles:
    - Instruction first
    - Use purpose-built tools
    - Framework matters
    - AI is fundamentally a pattern recognition system
    - Personalization, privacy, and public perception are critical.
3. Warnings:
    - Avoid anthropomorphizing AI
    - Treat adult users as adults
    - Address chatbot limitations
4. AI Literacy Frameworks – Introduces frameworks for understanding, evaluating, and using AI responsibly.

Policy and Best Practices

- Data Privacy:
    - Compliance with laws (KSDPA, FERPA, COPPA, CIPA, COPA)
    - Transparent data practices, consent requirements, and protection of sensitive information
    - Integration into existing privacy frameworks
    - Promote digital citizenship and awareness.

- Accessibility:
    - Ensure universal access and close digital gaps
    - Align with Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
    - Support personalization and assistive learning
    - Build sustainable infrastructure.
- Security:
    - Differentiate privacy (what data to collect) from security (how to protect it)
    - Implement technical controls and cybersecurity measures.
- Transparency:
    - Disclose when, where, and why AI is used
    - Ensure explainability and accountability
    - Cite AI use in formal outputs.
- Human Oversight:
    - Keep humans in the loop for review and decision-making
    - Design AI to support human judgment and well-being
    - Monitor and evaluate continuously.
- Training:
    - Address bias and transparency in training data
    - Build capacity among educators, students, and families.

Future Directions

Upcoming sessions will feature KU researchers sharing guidelines for responsible AI implementation across all education levels. The framework emphasizes:

- Human-centered foundations
- Strategic planning for AI integration
- Equal AI learning opportunities for all students
- Ongoing evaluation and professional development.

Executive Session

EXEC SESSION 6:59:00

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: John Hess, Frank Henderson, Wendy Fritz. Mrs. Haas 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, January 14, 2026

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

Presentation: CTE The Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Citizenship Day

Natalie Clark, Assistant Director, CTE, Standards, Career and Assessment Services

The presentation focuses on Kansas Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and highlights the leadership teams representing various student organizations across Kansas schools.

The featured officers include presidents and vice presidents from multiple schools, such as Newton High School, Blue Valley High School, Olathe North High School, Wichita Collegiate High School, Pleasant Ridge High School, Republic County High School, Wabaunsee High School, Jackson Heights High School, Riverton High School, Hays High School, Wichita East High School, Labette County High School, and Basehor-Linwood High School. These students hold positions like President, Vice President, Executive Vice President, and 1st Vice President, reflecting a diverse representation of leadership roles within CTSOs.

Each officer spoke briefly about the effect being part of a CTSO has had on their life. The Board asked questions, took photos with the students, and later, at the lunch hour, the Board was hosted at the Docking building, by the CTSO organizations. The Board sat at tables with the students and had great discussions and a good meal.

Presentation: Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Annual Report

SEAC
1:13:49

Dr. Lena Kisner, Chair, SEAC
Bert Moore, Director, Special Education

Dr. Kisner thanked the Board for joining the SEAC members for breakfast that morning. She noted that the Board had been presented with the Annual Report in

advance. She went over a few of the highlights and then welcomed questions and any discussion that the members wished to have.

Update: Citizenship Kickoff Events for America's 250th anniversary — 250th
Nathan McAlister, Humanities Program Manager — 1:24:00

The presentation focuses on commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and its significance in civic education. It begins by emphasizing the importance of understanding the words, connections, and assessments related to this historic document. Nathan McAlister, Humanities Program Manager for HGSS, introduces the theme of exploring not just what was written in the Declaration, but why it was written.

The second section examines key grievances listed in the Declaration, such as quartering troops, making the military independent and superior to civil power, imposing taxes without consent, and depriving citizens of trial by jury. These examples underscore the principle that words matter, and students should grasp both the content and context of these statements.

The presentation then draws Kansas-specific connections, highlighting the state's role in American history. It references the Kansas Bill of Rights, which affirms equal and inalienable rights, and historical events like Bleeding Kansas, the fight against slavery, and Kansas' leadership in reforms such as women's rights and populist measures like the secret ballot. Additionally, Kansas' pivotal role in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education case is noted as a critical connection to civil rights.

Teachers, including Thomas Fulbright (Hope Street Academy) and Megan Berry (Abilene High School), are identified as leaders in this educational effort, representing different board districts. Their involvement signals a collaborative approach to teaching these civic principles.

The presentation revisits the famous passage from the Declaration asserting that governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed, and that people have the right to alter or abolish destructive governments. This section ties into formative and summative assessments, suggesting that evaluation will be part of the learning process.

A historical perspective is added with a reference to the Gettysburg Address, which tested whether a nation "conceived in liberty" could endure. This serves as a reminder of the ongoing challenge of upholding democratic ideals.

Finally, the presentation looks forward, posing questions about new connections and lessons to learn as part of the 250th-anniversary celebrations. It concludes with a Q&A segment and a note of thanks.

Act on Professional Development Regulation — Regs
Dr. Renee Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services — 1:36:50

Mrs. Arnold moved that the Kansas State Board of Education approves eliminating the requirement for districts to submit a separate professional development plan to reduce unnecessary administrative obligations and allow districts to focus resources on the locally driven professional learning activities embedded in their school improvement work. Mr. Hershberger seconded the motion. Motion carried 10-0.

Presentation: High Quality Instructional Materials — HQIM
Dr. Renee Nugent, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services — 1:41:20

The presentation focuses on the critical role of instructional materials in achieving quality instruction across Kansas classrooms. It begins by framing three guiding questions: What role do instructional materials play in quality instruction? How does KSDE support local selection processes? And what is the current state of instructional materials in Kansas, along with next steps for support.

KSDE defines quality instruction as a classroom environment characterized by high expectations, data-driven teaching, intentional and cohesive lesson design, standards-aligned tasks and materials, and deep student engagement. These components work together to ensure students meet rigorous state standards. KSDE is actively working to clarify this vision and support educators and leaders in implementing these conditions.

To achieve this vision, KSDE provides resources such as standards alignment toolkits, instructional visions, an instructional materials dashboard, selection and implementation guidance, observation tools, and professional learning opportunities. The process begins with the periodic review of curricular standards every seven years, but revised standards alone do not guarantee improved instruction. Therefore, KSDE emphasizes the importance of adopting high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials as a transformative strategy for school improvement.

Research underscores the urgency of this work. Studies reveal that students spend a significant portion of classroom time on assignments that are not grade-appropriate, while teachers devote hours each week creating or selecting materials—often resulting in lower-quality assignments than those from district-adopted curricula. Importantly,

students who start the year below grade level and gain access to better assignments make substantially more academic progress than peers without such access.

The presentation highlights the role of EdReports, a national organization that reviews instructional materials for alignment to evidence-based practices. EdReports has evaluated nearly all core ELA and math materials, prompting improvements from dozens of publishers and saving states time and resources through its rigorous review process. KSDE encourages districts to use EdReports as one component of their selection process, cautioning against relying solely on "Meets Expectations" ratings. Instead, districts should closely examine full reports to ensure alignment with local priorities and identify nuanced strengths and gaps.

KSDE's selection guidance is grounded in three beliefs: selecting and implementing high-quality materials, supported by professional learning, is transformative; decisions should be made locally with educator expertise and community input; and materials must align with Kansas standards, the vision for quality instruction, and research-based practices.

Current data from Fall 2025 shows that while most districts and accredited private schools reported their instructional materials, only about half of ELA and math materials meet expectations on all review gateways, and science materials lag significantly behind. Many districts still rely on teacher-created or supplemental resources as core materials, which are not reviewed by third parties.

Looking ahead, KSDE plans to launch a data visualization web application in early 2026. This tool will allow authenticated users—such as KSDE staff, superintendents, and curriculum directors—to explore reported instructional materials, view district-level selections, and filter data to compare similar districts. The goal is to foster collaboration, transparency, and informed decision-making across Kansas.

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

Committee Chair Reports Travel Requests Future Requests 2:37:11

Mr. Hershberger: Ag in the Classroom 4th Quarter Report. Kits going out to 809 new teachers. Partnerships added 74 agribusinesses. 20 events in different communities in 2025. 26 new donors.
Opioid Committee: meeting tomorrow. Shared street language for drugs.

Mrs. Haas: Missing the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) meeting because it is during the Board meeting. *Families Together* has parent's rights and special education training.

Chair Report: Literacy Day next Tuesday at the Capitol. KEEN Luncheon February 20th KEEN conference Kansas Exemplary Educator Network. 32 outstanding teachers in their second year. Horizon awards. Survey is up for the Commissioner search is on website. KAIRS next month, Monday night is banquet, Tuesday morning breakfast.

Travel requests

Mr. Porter moved that the Board Travel Requests be accepted. Mrs. Haas seconded. Motion carried 10-0.

Future requests for Board items

Mrs. Arnold – Lack of cyber security funding at the district level

Mrs. Dombrosky – KESA strategy for specialized schools, how to approach KSD and KSSB Lake Mary with KESA

Mrs. O'Brien - Cursive writing report

Mrs. Potter – Safe and Secure Schools, definition of persistently dangerous schools follow-up

Comments

Vice Chair Zeck is concerned that the ABA law is not clear, and he regrets he voted for the guidance. He continues to be concerned about government involvement in early childhood, mental health and taking the responsibility that parents need to have for their children.

Chair Hopkins adjourned the meeting until the Board meets on February 10th, 2026.

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Chair Cathy Hopkins Board Secretary Deborah Bremer