



USD 497 NEWS

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Superintendent Appoints Community Members to Task Force

With additional appointments pending, Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent Rick Doll announces the selection of 19 community members to serve on the Lawrence Elementary School Facility Vision Task Force:

- Jessica Beeson, Cordley Elementary parent; KU College of Liberal Arts and Sciences project director; Graduate of Lawrence Public Schools
- Jackie Counts, Former Quail Run Elementary parent (Southwest Junior High/Free State High students); Early childhood social work background; Kansas Children's Cabinet/Early Learning Coordinating Council and Early Childhood Mental Health Advisory Board member
- Erika Dvorske, Schwegler Elementary parent; United Way chief executive officer
- Brad Finkeldei, Lawrence/Douglas County Planning Commission member; Attorney; St. John parent whose children will attend West Junior High and Free State High.
- Steve Glass, Lawrence Schools Foundation Board member; Retired business owner, Graduate of Lawrence Public Schools; Parent of graduates of Lawrence Public Schools.
- G.R. Gordon-Ross, Prairie Park parent; Olathe Medical Center Pharmacy/IT coordinator
- Julie Hack, Former Lawrence Board of Education member; Chamber Government Affairs Committee member
- Marcel Harmon, Woodlawn Elementary parent; North Lawrence Neighborhood Association member; Engineer/anthropologist
- Nancy Hays, Sunset Hill Elementary parent; Lawrence Memorial Hospital financial analyst
- Greg Hough, Wakarusa Valley Elementary parent; Assistant U.S. Attorney for Kansas
- David Johnson, Bert Nash chief executive officer; Chamber of Commerce Board member
- Valerie Johnson-Powell, Lawrence Education Association President; Lawrence High speech-language pathologist; Parent of graduates of Lawrence Public Schools
- Chris Jones, Deerfield Elementary parent, Hasting's store manager
- Shannon Kimball, 2010-11 Langston Hughes Elementary parent; Former Georgia Department of Education policy specialist; Attorney
- Sean Smith, Sunflower Elementary parent; KU Special Education professor; Kansas State Department of Education Special Education Advisory Committee chairman
- Lori Tapahonso, Haskell Indian Nations University adjunct faculty member; Lawrence Human Relations Committee; Parent of a graduate of Lawrence Public Schools
- Tom Waechter, Hillcrest Elementary parent; KU Design/Construction Management professor
- Bessie Walker, USD 497 Equity Council member; NAACP former secretary; Social services background
- Chuck Warner, Retired bank president; Chamber of Commerce member; 1999 School Bond Issue chairman; Parent of graduates of Lawrence Public Schools

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The school district received more than 60 applications in one week's time, which Doll says speaks highly of the community's willingness to serve and its interest in the continuous improvement of the Lawrence Public Schools.

“I've worked with the school board members, school administrators and community educational leaders to review and pare the applications in order to balance the task force's membership and form a work group of a manageable size,” Doll said. “I've invited the service of parents, staff and community members, both male and female, of different ages, races and backgrounds with varied lengths of residency. Task Force members represent all geographic areas of the school district and will bring to the table a diversity of viewpoints and personal and professional experiences.”

The Lawrence Board of Education charges the Task Force with recommending a community vision and plan for the school district elementary facilities that reflect the varied community and educational values, given the restraints of current and anticipated district resources. The school board has asked this group to:

1. Review the history of current facilities, reflecting on when and why the community constructed these facilities. This review shall include a look at the educational programming existing at various times of construction.
2. Update and review the current physical condition of existing facilities.
3. Review educational research with regard to elementary school size and class size and the appropriate staffing for an elementary school.
4. Review research with regard to the role elementary schools play in community design.
5. Review operating costs of various buildings and non-financial factors that the board should consider in determining the most efficient use of facilities.
6. Review and articulate the meaning or meanings of “neighborhood school.”
7. Review current district planning practices and recommend changes to facilitate better coordination with city and county planning practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on how the district could guide growth.
8. Develop factors to be considered before constructing an additional elementary facility to meet the educational programming when such construction is warranted.
9. Develop a recommended elementary facility for future new construction intended to replace an existing facility or facilities.

During Monday's school board meeting, board president Scott Morgan will appoint two board members to lead the Task Force as co-chairs.

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