



## USD 497 News Release

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### Board President Announces Interview with Third Interim Superintendent Finalist



Lawrence Board of Education President Kelly Jones has called a special meeting from 6:00-9:00 p.m. Thursday, August 1, to consider approval of administrative compensation and to recess into two executive sessions to discuss non-elected personnel, with no action to follow. During the executive sessions, the board will interview the final interim superintendent candidate, Dr. Jeanice Swift of Michigan, and then discuss all three finalists.

A 36-year veteran educator, Dr. Swift has served as an educational leadership consultant since January, supporting PreK-12 education leaders, leadership teams, and board trustees. She previously served the Ann Arbor Public Schools as superintendent for over a decade. In Colorado Springs School District 11, she served as assistant superintendent, executive director, principal, assistant principal, resource coach, and a secondary English and Spanish teacher for 15 years. She also taught ten years in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford School District in Texas. Dr. Swift earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Arlington, her master's at the University of Colorado, and a doctorate at the University of Denver.

"I am excited to explore the Lawrence community during this visit," Swift said, "because there is no substitute for face-to-face engagement and conversation. The opportunity to continue and deepen the work to serve students well, to support the Lawrence team, to engage with families and community — working together to ensure a quality educational experience for every child, every day — is what drives my interest in this position."

In the Ann Arbor schools, Swift's equity-centered leadership focused on student opportunities and achievement, fiscal responsibility, and community engagement. The district made noteworthy gains in student outcomes, particularly among traditionally underserved students. Improvements included increases in graduation rates among vulnerable students, reductions in disciplinary rates, as well as a continued focus on improving support for all students.

The Michigan Association of School Administrators named Swift its Superintendent of the Year in 2018. The National School Public Relations Association recognized her as a Superintendent to Watch for demonstrating dynamic leadership with a strong emphasis on communication.

"The board was impressed by Dr. Swift's work in Ann Arbor and her career-long dedication to helping students overcome challenges to find success in school and in life," said Jones. "We look forward to introducing her to some of the incredible people in our district and community during her visit. This visit will also give us the opportunity to learn more about her vision for a year of transitional leadership that engages and supports everyone who makes up Lawrence Public Schools."

**MORE**

## Page 2 – August 1 Board Special Meeting/Interim Superintendent Search

The interim superintendent search began following the June 29 resignation of Dr. Anthony Lewis, superintendent of schools since 2018. The board interviewed USD 497 Deputy Superintendent Dr. Larry Englebrick on Monday; he met with advisory groups Tuesday. Dr. Thomas Ahart, an educational consultant of Des Moines, Iowa, is visiting the district today. The board will interview him during a special meeting at 6:00 tonight.

Applicants for the interim superintendent position were collected and thoroughly vetted by the Kansas Association of School Boards, enabling the board to work to fill the position on a short timeline. All information about the search will be available at <https://www.usd497.org/InterimSuperintendentSearch>.

Each interview day this week includes a tour of our district led by educators and building administrators, as well as candidate meetings with district administrators, certified and classified staff union leadership, and school family and community members serving on district committees. Individuals meeting with the finalists will have the opportunity to provide the board feedback via a survey. The board aims to fill the interim superintendent role by August 12. Dr. Lewis' last day in our district is August 9.

This fall the board will hire a firm to conduct a national search for a long-term superintendent to begin their service July 1, 2025. This timeline provides ample opportunity for expanded community engagement to guide the board in hiring the best person to lead our district and serve our community moving forward.

### **Special Meeting Action Item: Administration Compensation**

The board annually reviews and approves changes to compensation and fringe benefits for all employee groups. Certified and classified staff salary increases have been determined through successful negotiations with the Lawrence Education Association and PAL-CWA. On Thursday night, the board will consider approving the superintendent's recommended 4.077% increase to the administrative salary pool, totaling \$245,520. This will enable the district to finalize 2024-2025 compensation packages for all employees.

The total allocation for each employee group is as follows:

- Certified Staff: \$1,920,218 (4.077% increase to the Certified Salary Pool); Approved by the board on 7/22/24.
- Classified Staff: \$1,086,912 (6.267% increase to the Classified Salary Pool); Approved by the board on 7/28/24.
- Administrative Staff: \$245,520 (4.077% increase to the Administrative Salary Pool); Recommended for approval on 8/1/24.

Additionally, the Board of Education approved on May 13, 2024, continued full funding of the cost of a single medical, dental, and vision insurance package for all employee groups. At \$727.12 per covered full-time employee per month, prorated for qualifying part-time employees, the estimated cost increase of this fringe benefit package is \$2,133,890.

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