

| Timestamp          | As the Futures Planning Committee develops a recommendation to present to the school board in February, what input would you like to share with the committee about its draft proposal of budget reductions?   |
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| 1/17/2023 18:55:50 | No 4 day school week.  |
| 1/17/2023 18:57:16 | Thank you for putting the community input sessions together. It was great to hear others' questions and concerns.  |
| 1/17/2023 19:00:32 | 1. What are current "average" class sizes at the MS and HS level for which moving to 28 and 30 would generate the estimated staffing savings? 2. How would an increase in average class size at MS and HS be achieved? It can't simply be instances of 'instead of six sections of 25 we'll have five sections of 30.' I imagine it would require elimination of lower enrollment classes, many targeted at special needs or T&G students. Without details on how class/staff reductions would be achieved, I fear we're being sold a pig in a poke. 3. I strongly urge rejection of a 4-day learning week. That is typically a solution for small rural districts with high transportation costs -- not our problem. The early release Wednesday already burdens working families, and childcare options in Lawrence is under-supplied. Such a change cannot be contemplated without several years of community development and buy-in.   |
| 1/17/2023 19:09:56 | This problem is worse now than it need be because 1) we over-invested in HS classrooms during the last bond issue, 2) prior school boards spent down reserves in a non-transparent way. In particular, the "crisis" of cash reserves was only acknowledged after the 2021 school board election -- it was not an issue raised or discussed by any candidate because the board and district administration did not fess up to "eating the seed corn" until after the election.  |
| 1/17/2023 19:50:18 | I strongly support raising the classified salary because that has been desperately needed. Classified staff are not making a living wage. Certified salary is important too, especially with all the freezes we have had in the last handful of years. I also agree that we should decrease the amount of administrators at the district office building. Our district is very top-heavy compared to other districts of similar size in Kansas. I was shocked to hear that Middle School staff had two plan times. Elementary School staff have very limited plan time, expected to even use some of that plan time to transport their kids to and from specials or library and even have to leave their lunch early in time to pick up kids from the lunchroom. Staff across the district should have the same amount of plan time no matter their grade level. Class sizes are alarmingly large right now at the elementary level. As a mental health professional, I have directly seen the negative impact of going from normal class sizes to large class sizes. Teachers are not able to reach kids and support them academically and emotionally as much as teachers used to be able to do with smaller class sizes. My top concern would be to lower class sizes at the elementary level. If this means closing two elementary schools and one middle school, I am in support of that. I recently learned that when we lost teaching positions last year, that 90% of the lost positions were Elementary level. We lost multiple classrooms at our school, cutting out an entire grade level worth of teachers. Our combined classrooms are trying to do their best, but it is not the best that we can do as a school and as a district. There are way too many expectations on our combined classroom teachers teaching two grade levels. Our district is going to have more quality teachers leaving our district if we continue to have combined classrooms. |
| 1/17/2023 20:20:46 | While the team plan seems like a desirable option monetarily, how will we compensate for the time that is used multiple times each week to discuss students who need additional attention? Sensitive information shouldn't be in an email and team plan is where student services helps coordinate with the teachers about how to care of children who need extra attention. Also, this is where teachers discuss students who are struggling academically and how to work together to help them get back on track. Adding one more class and assigning an additional, larger class in place of this coordination time seems like a path to middle schools that focus on moving as many children through as possible without a focus on what is best for our students. A 6th grader can't function like a high schooler and that is the model we would be creating. Also, we don't have enough teachers to fill the positions available now. What will happen if we lose more staff?   |
| 1/17/2023 21:34:00 | Would certified staff make \$15/hr at the start of the school year if we close 3 schools?  |
| 1/17/2023 21:35:15 | Do all of the cost saving projections and recommendations come from the district admin.? Why not the consultants?  |
| 1/17/2023 21:56:51 | We need to be looking at cost generating strategies instead of cutting. None of the recommendations are feasible for the long term. We need to partner with the community for hs electives, build opportunities for donations to special programming, etc.   |
| 1/17/2023 22:11:54 | Requesting that district administration buildings close and administrators and their offices be moved into schools that have space. Administrators can work remotely or hybrid. Please prioritize having children in lower classroom sizes and keeping schools open.   |
| 1/17/2023 22:32:22 | After attending the community session tonight at FSHS, I would agree with a committee member I spoke with who said 4-day school week for 6-12 but 5-day for k-5. That said, I still feel this is too drastic. we need to consolidate what we have to utilize more building space. This could mean making elementary k-6 again. Or what about a k-8 school? While many families could work with a 4-day week, too many can't. I fear a 4-day school week will only mean more loss of students to other districts, especially with "school choice" becoming law next year. We need to preserve our public schools and embrace the future. What a lot more Montessori programs? Schools focused on language, arts, STEM? These are things that will attract people to our district. Please consider what a 4-day school week would mean for those who can't afford childcare and think about the future of our district.  |

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| 1/18/2023 6:38:39  | <p>Point 1: Capacity is more than just students in seats. Many students have individual learning needs that (with or without a legal plan) cannot be met in a room full of 32 students and one teacher. I asked the architect what off-sets for at-risk students were figured into capacity and he shared that honestly they just started working on Special Populations spaces a week ago. From an equity lens--students who are most at-risk often cannot get to school if they miss the bus and fall through the cracks in larger schools far removed from their local community. What is the cost to a young student's education (both in and out of school) to sitting on a bus for hours every week, when more privileged students do not have that time wasted? Point 2--What are we doing to promote of our community and district?. It seems we are being penny-wise and pound foolish to "put money away for a rainy day" and then cutting vital programs so that it metaphorically floods. One committee member shared that we "can't count on Panasonic families moving to Lawrence", but what are we doing to actively recruit those families? Lawrence is a great place to live, but only if we have strong community based neighborhood schools. An ancillary point, what are we doing to promote LVS? There used to be billboards along I-70 and I-35. Where is our district ESC led--social media presence? I see ads for commercial virtual schools all over my social media feed, but it seems LVS teachers are the only ones trying to promote the school. Why are we renting a building to our direct competition for virtual students with Greenbush? And that rent only goes into capital outlay but student dollars are pulled away from the general operating budget. Point 3: Is anyone lobbying the KS legislature to get this ridiculous stricture on our tax dollars removed? The money all comes from my taxes--why should a pool of it be marked for special interests (developers and contractors)? But if we do have to budget with one hand tied behind our backs, I think that investing in energy efficiencies to reduce utility costs is a great start.</p> |
| 1/18/2023 8:56:53  | <p>I feel strongly that a four day school week, but a five day work week, does not alleviate the issues or create the benefits that are intended. If the goal is to reduce building use to save money, the fifth day needs to be remote, which causes another set of issues with technology access and efficacy of productive time use. If teachers are in buildings on the fifth day, then it doesn't save as much money in building use. I believe that a goal of a four day work week (not a four day school week / five day work week) is to attract teacher candidates and retain current teachers because there is a huge benefit of a four day work week. To make a five day work week does the opposite. Speaking as a current teacher, working five days but only having students four days makes me more unhappy with the schedule.</p>  |
| 1/18/2023 9:15:27  | <p>1. Equitably staffed schools based on student needs, not numbers. Student data for academics, emotional screeners and behavioral write ups needs to be utilized to staff schools so that teachers and students are fully supported at each school. Currently, staffing allotments are for student numbers, however, some schools struggle more with higher populations of students presenting challenging behavioral and emotional needs that greatly impact the academic achievement of all students in the building. Therefore, staffing needs to be allotted differently - it needs to be allotted equitably in the sense that more support staff should be seen at schools that have higher emotional/behavioral needs. 2. Raise classified pay and freeze upper administration pay - no one below the role of the superintendent in this district ought to make more than 100K a year while our classified staff members are having to live at poverty wages. No one who makes 100K or more should see a raise in pay until we have classified staff working at a living wage and wages for certified staff comparable to outside districts. 3. Teacher planning time - secondary teachers utilize team planning time to work in a team to support struggling students with academic, emotional and/or behavioral needs. If we take away the opportunity for teachers to work together on these needs, we will decrease the quality of educational services that we are providing. Do we need to make budget cuts? Absolutely, however, we should not make these cuts if we are going to compromise the services that we can provide. We will only get more families to attend our schools if our reputation increases, not decreases. We will only retain highly qualified and outstanding educators and staff members if we pay them comparable to other surrounding districts. If we continue to compromise the working conditions of staff members, then we will be compromising the instructional conditions of our students.</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 9:22:54  | <p>Where do these numbers come from? For instance, how do you know that raising class sizes will generate xxxxx amount of savings? Do you know what class sizes currently are?</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 9:42:58  | <p>I appreciate the work that all of you are doing to save the future of our school district. I put several sticky notes out last night, but the one thing I did not talk about is that the real priority should be are we doing what's best for kids? Classrooms at the elementary level with 32 students does not fit that goal. My own son, now 38, still struggles in math because his third grade class had that many students in it, and that was nearly 30 years ago. If we want to close the gaps in reading and math, we need to set a maximum capacity of 23-26 from 3rd grade through middle school in math and ELA, and cap K-2 at 20. If you were running a restaurant that had a maximum seating capacity of 100 patrons, but only two servers and one cook, how would all of those customers get the highest quality service and timely delivery? The food that we provide for our students is knowledge. If everyone is stressed out because there are too many customers to serve and not enough servers to help them, we are not serving our community effectively. If we pack everyone in like sardines, no one is comfortable, and kids are the ones who will suffer. Thanks for your time.</p>  |
| 1/18/2023 10:18:37 | <p>As a teacher in the district, I am more concerned about my working conditions than my salary. I would rather have fewer students and less money. Also, if you would allow LVS, in the elementary school at least, to function as it was designed, as a support for homeschoolers, we would have a lot more students and bring in more money. We lost a lot of families when the District decided we were going to be a traditional online school rather than a support for homeschoolers. Instead of our usual 1,000+ students our enrollment this year was just over 700 students.</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 12:05:22 | <p>Public needs more transparency regarding how we got to 1% cash reserves and what the plan is to be fiscally responsible in the future and prevent this shortfall from occurring again. If the goal is not to be back here doing this in 5 years we need to know how the board and district are going to prevent this.</p>   |

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| 1/18/2023 12:06:41 | Consider high school centers of 9th and 10th at one school and 11th and 12th at the other. This could consolidate resources and address equity.  |
| 1/18/2023 12:08:07 | Transparency to the public regarding how the numbers were reached. We need to see the math on how each option will save the projected dollar amount.   |
| 1/18/2023 12:26:07 | Will school choice bill allow students within the district to move to other schools regardless of boundaries? If so how will this be addressed and included in consideration for school closures?  |
| 1/18/2023 13:53:30 | Changing to a 4 day school week without another option, will disrupt full time working parents and how they can structure their workdays.  |
| 1/18/2023 13:54:00 | I was surprised to see that a four-day school week was receiving serious consideration, and I was even more surprised that committee members and RSP could not answer relatively basic questions about the proposal, including how the projected cost savings were calculated. Decision-makers seemed even more surprised when parents in my group voiced that they and others they knew would consider leaving the district altogether. This left me and my husband with a sense that this proposal had not been thoroughly evaluated, which is troubling given the potentially profound impact it would have on children and families who live in this community and the potential impact to families relocating to the area and making a choice about whether to buy a house in Lawrence or in a neighboring community offering a five-day school week. I am concerned that this unstudied proposal would only exacerbate the district's problem of already declining enrollment, and I was presented with no data to the contrary at the meeting. The most information I received was a committee member's anecdotal story that she had heard that when a Missouri district recently implemented the four-day work week, teacher applications quadrupled. This tells me nothing about how the measure would impact the district's bottom line...or even more important, how my children's learning and well-being would be impacted. We are among the families who would consider leaving the district if transitions to a four-day school week (particularly with so little information available to parents), and I have talked to others who feel the same way. Has the district studied what the projected enrollment decline would look like if it ultimately implements a four-day school week? If the district makes decisions that result in further declines to enrollment, this seems like a step in the wrong direction. The decision is particularly concerning given the recent enactment of the open-enrollment "school choice" bill that will going into effect in 2024-2024. Will people stick with this district if they have a choice to go to another district offering a five-day school week? I don't know, but the bigger problem is that it seems like the district doesn't know either. To the extent there is information that would support this proposal, it was not available to us at the public input session. At a minimum, this proposal should be off the table for the coming school year pending further review. I appreciate all of the work people are doing regarding cost-saving proposals during another tough year. I accept that none of these choices are easy to make, and I do support the bulk of the other proposals considered—even though none are ideal. |
| 1/18/2023 14:45:46 | Eliminating Team Plan (not a second plan period as previous communications have suggested) from the Middle School will do a large disservice to your underserved student populations. These Team meeting are VITAL to making sure ALL students succeed at the middle school level and allow us to identify student issues/concerns and make a plan to get students the help they need whether it be social/emotional or academic. To then add another section of students and raise the cap sizes of our middle school classes will add a LARGE amount of work to middle school teacher's work load. That will also make it highly unlikely that we are able to connect and help all students. Our students with the most needs are going to be left behind if you get rid of Team plan at the middle school level. If there is anything to get rid of, I recommend getting rid of FLEX and/or combining FLEX with advisory, making the class longer.  |
| 1/18/2023 14:52:33 | The only way I can see 4 day school weeks working is at the high school level. Those students could handle longer school days and even use the extra day off to work, volunteer, catch up on homework or even make up a class. It would not be feasible for middle or elementary school level students. The loss of information from one week to another is already tough in a 5 day school week at the elementary level, I can't imagine what it would be at 4 days a week. Can we get information about how not contributing to a teachers retirement option would benefit both the teacher and the district? Someone mentioned that but I didnt hear the full piece. I think the district should also look at clustering schools for K-2 and 3-5 on the east side where the population is decreasing. We could close multiple buildings but repurpose some to make it more efficient for the district. Even schools like Quail and Langston could be split between K-2 and 3-5. That way, its not just happening on one side of town.   |
| 1/18/2023 18:04:39 | "Repurposing" schools instead of closing then is still going to take kids away from schools where they are known as individuals and put them in schools where they are one of the crowd. Small neighborhood schools are significantly better for kids! My son has autism, and being in a school where everyone knows him makes it so much easier for him to participate and excel.   |
| 1/18/2023 18:18:09 | What are the educational improvements of a 4 day week? What comparable school districts have gone to a 4 day week? Do you have an outside legal opinion regarding compliance with state funding requirements for a 4 day week? How many students are already turned away from BGC?   |
| 1/18/2023 18:29:25 | Will these google docs questions be made available to the public?  |
| 1/18/2023 18:29:51 | Have there been any plans for revenue raising?   |
| 1/18/2023 18:32:34 | I would like to prioritize keeping the schools open and financial support for teachers and staff. I think the first thing we should reduce are the wages for high level admin staff that does not have daily student contact.  |
| 1/18/2023 18:38:06 | Keep all elementary schools open. Do not combine Central and Billy Mills. Cut administrative costs, including positions, salaries, and building assets. Liquidate unused real estate.  |

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| 1/18/2023 18:41:24 | Please close any and all elementary and middle schools that are underutilized. It is outrageous to me that the board delayed closing these schools and sacrificed educational quality for the district at large by increasing elementary class sizes solely because they faced some angry citizens. As board members your chief responsibility is TO THE STUDENTS. Increasing class sizes is BAD FOR STUDENTS. Closing some small and failing schools imposes relatively trivial costs on those affected—they will have to bus a couple miles! Big deal! Board members should be ashamed for shirking their responsibility last year and have to step up and do the right thing and close to hear schools!  |
| 1/18/2023 18:49:12 | Increasing class sizes is directly linked to poorer student performance. It's very alarming that this is then the first consideration on the proposed budget. This should not be considered at all. Increasing teacher pay to a reasonable level is not a trade off for larger class sizes.   |
| 1/18/2023 18:50:54 | How was the "seats" calculated? I'm sure that if you filled any classroom with 28-30 students it would crowded, overwhelming and unsustainable. It's also not feasible or accommodating students with accessibility issues.   |
| 1/18/2023 18:51:10 | No matter how difficult, closing at least a couple of schools has to be on the table. I wouldn't want it to be my neighborhood school, and I will admit that, but if my neighborhood school had class sizes that were half as big as other schools and was fiscally inefficient,, I would really like to think I could be a realist about the situation this district is in. This town has prided itself on quality instruction for DECADES. We're fooling ourselves right now. We as a community are in a world of hurt and pleasing all constituents is going to end up pleasing no one. We also have to figure out how to pay teachers more. Period.   |
| 1/18/2023 18:52:20 | 30 student class size will be unmanageable in relation ti student success. Teachers need plan times by eliminating a second plan time you are expecting teachers to work off the clock to grade/lesson plan. 4 day student week will cause the at risk students to slip even further. Is there a proposal to eliminate the bloated administrative positions?  |
| 1/18/2023 19:10:25 | School boundary lines need to be redrawn if schools are closed. Sending all the Central kids to Billy Mills is unexceptable!  |
| 1/18/2023 19:11:53 | Consider the history of the schools and it's community significance when considering school closures.   |
| 1/18/2023 19:13:32 | Ensure that ESL and title support spaces are counted in capacity.   |
| 1/18/2023 19:43:38 | Don't put these budget cuts on the classroom side. Make cuts of things on the higher up scale. Students and teachers shouldn't be punished for the decline in our flawed economy.   |
| 1/18/2023 19:58:32 | Small class sizes are extremely important and key to effective education and relationship building with students.   |
| 1/18/2023 19:59:57 | Concerns four day school week that is proposed would not only save enough money needed but also concerned this would not benefit students and lead to harm and a decline in learning. What benefits for students have been shown for districts similar to Lawrence who have already implemented this model?   |
| 1/18/2023 20:06:40 | Please look into redrawing school boundaries across USD 497. How can closing two elementary schools fix the over capacity in our other elementary schools out at Prairie Park, Langston Hughes, Sunflower, and Deerfield? Redistribute the students across the district so there are manageable classroom sizes and students can be successful.   |
| 1/18/2023 20:07:22 | The proposal of a four day school week would put an incredible amount of financial stress on families that rely on after school programs like Boys and Girls Club for after school care, and those who don't as well. Some parents have the ability to work from home, which I'd imagine is a positive for this proposal (I strongly disagree). An argument can be made that families who work from home can care for their children on the non-school day. That is an incredibly flawed argument - parents who work from home are WORKING! I understand that may come across as ones-the-top, but please put yourself in the shoes of those families who cannot afford additional child care. Although a parent can work from home, it is NOT an indicator that a child will be attended to, from an educational and social aspect. Kids need to be in school to learn, parents need to have the ability to work without the stress and anxiety of whether their children will succeed educationally and socially. This proposal DOES NOT consider the needs of families in the community. Education and care are top priorities for parents and this proposal will only set our children back in regards to education and social interactions. I, along with many others, believe that this proposal is not in the best interest of our children while also placing an undue burden on parents. A four day school week means at least a month of education (likely more) missed from children who are learning how to mature and learn as they grow. This proposal is incredibly frustrating and concerning. Please consider how this would have affected you and your families during the most important years of YOUR childhood education. This is an unreasonable and irresponsible proposal that will provide a massive burden on our children and their parents. I appreciate the opportunity for the community to respond. I ask you to truly consider the impact this would have had on YOU and YOUR family during childhood, when making decisions for children who did not ask for this. Budgets are difficult, I understand. However, concerns of the community - parents and children - MUST come before the needs of the city. Budget cuts should NOT be at the expense of our children's ability to learn, grow and succeed in life. |
| 1/18/2023 20:11:57 | Respectfully, Ashley Wright<br>4 day weeks are educational devastating and untenable for families with working parents.   |

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| 1/18/2023 20:16:53 | <p>Class sizes in elementary are already so incredibly large. Behaviors and mental health needs have grown to the point that having kids shoved into classrooms with more and more students is not safe for the students, staff, etc. When will we look at the trauma that the students who have to witness these large scale behaviors and dud regulation of others, and make that as much of a priority? The sun shortage and staff shortage is massive. If schools were closed each time schools were able to staff a building it would be a real eye opener to families. I know several families that have talked about the increase in classroom behaviors and how teachers are doing more with less and less staff support. From my families and friends in Missouri, many of them have been doing 4-day weeks for awhile. Not only does it save some money, they use it as a recruitment tool. It doesn't sound like this is how usd497 is looking at it. Maybe I'm wrong but staff I've talked to said they will likely still be working on those days. Independence MO stated their applications have increased 450% since announcing the start of a 4-day WORK week, for all. I feel like going to 4-days is not beneficial if it doesn't help with the moral and burnout of teachers. Could a 4-day work week (with teachers off the majority of those Monday's) also help address the sub shortage? Basically—I feel like we are putting students and staff at risk by overcrowding classrooms for the sake of the budget.</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 20:17:10 | <p>I'd like to see the actual numbers of how a 4 day school week saves money, exactly how oxy from where since teacher salaries remain the same, boys and girls club will still use the building and need utilities, etc. I'd also like to see data on how mixed grade classrooms are actually working and if it's the plan going forward to keep that system. I'd like to see which schools are being proposed to be closed and how the numbers support that.</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 20:20:41 | <p>Close ESC and sell the building. Get rid of all middle-management, and move the rest into one of your already vacant elementary schools. Close the college and career center and sell the building. Those programs can be maintained just fine in the high school buildings. Get rid of learning coaches. It is unconscionable to pack 30+ students in a classroom while learning coaches are paid to walk by and wave once per month. Get rid of your retention specialist and put that money in the classroom where it belongs. You have no veteran teachers who aren't looking to leave or retire at the earliest opportunity. Boost the top salaries by at least \$15K, and stop treating teachers poorly, or you won't have any left in a few years.</p>   |
| 1/18/2023 20:22:55 | <p>I have absolutely no faith in this process. It feels like it's been canned and directed from the start. For one thing, the district hasn't presented any novel ideas for cost savings over the prior ideas from last year. This is a complete lack of leadership from both the board and the administration. I can point to many issues that have developed through this process but will only focus on a few in my comments here. First, the entire planning effort is based on demographic projections that indicate the Panasonic plant will have no appreciable impact on the student population in Lawrence. This is completely false and it is at odds with projections from the State of Kansas, the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce and other entities and it defies common sense. I have to ask what you will do in three years when these projections are proven wrong? The first thing you will want to do is a bond issue to build new schools in the affected area. This is extremely disingenuous. Second, the suggestion of "mothballing" schools is also disingenuous. Clearly you want to close the schools, which is fine. But either you don't have the political capital, or you simply want to gloss over what you really plan to do with these buildings by calling it something other than it really is. If you are going to close schools, then close them. Admit that you wasted a lot of bond dollars improving schools that you now want to close and move down the road. Evidently you think the constituents in Lawrence are too dumb to see through this. Trust me, we aren't. At this point, USD 497 has burned through any political capital it previously had. Third, the four day workweek makes zero sense if teachers are to still be working on the 5th day. If you go to a four day week, it needs to be four days period with no one working on the 5th day so that buildings can be closed and money saved. This feels like a loss leader. Fourth, the ESDC should be closed and sold and moved into the "repurposed" middle school whichever one that happen to be. The ESDC is a massive facility located on highly valuable ground. If everyone else is making sacrifices then prudence would dictate that you move operations into an existing building and sell the ESDC. The proceeds could be escrowed and applied to the cost of construction of the new school in east Lawrence that you will inevitably have to build in three years because you choose to believe ridiculous projections from the consultants. Either way, the ESDC in its current form needs to go. The costs associated with maintaining that structure would go a long way toward plugging the budget hole. Fifth, class sizes are way too big under the proposed cost savings plan. I can guarantee you that if class size increases, I will pull my child from USD 497 and find a different option. I believe strongly in public education, but the erosion in providing a quality educational environment for my child is causing me to rethink all of this. Finally, I am upset and disgusted by the waste the administration has laid to USD497's ood standing in the state. Scores are down, quality is down. The finances are a mess. No one wants to work here. There used to be waiting lists of teachers trying to get jobs in this district. But low wages, poor work environment and a non-supportive administration have eroded that significantly. So much so that many positions remain unfilled at my child's school. None of this is due to the state funding formula or to covid, this is all due to mismanagement and a dysfunctional school board that doesn't ask hard questions. It pains me to see other districts doing well, and ours continuing to flounder. Finally, it was clear in talking with members of the futures planning committee that they disappointed by the process and that they don't support it any longer. I suspect if you asked them you would hear this very truth. Controlling a public process tightly with limited inputs and no responsiveness to questions is no process at all. I feel bad for them. I feel bad that they wasted their time. I feel bad that you used them to provide cover for decisions you didn't have the wherewithal to make. I have no doubt that these are tough times involving even more difficult decisions but in my opinion USD497 has put on a clinic in how NOT to effectively involve the community in a trusted and meaningful way. If I were your teacher, you would have had you retake the class.</p> |

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| 1/18/2023 20:26:46 | Cut district admin at ESC. There is no need for a director of everything at ESC. There is no need for a chief officer of everything at ESC. There is no need for a PR team at ESC. There is no need for an executive director of everything at ESC. The director of equity has created less equity than the district has ever had at ESC. There is no need for instructional coaches at ESC. There is no need for every executive and director and assistant director to have their own executive assistant at ESC. There is no need for all the additional, unnecessary supervisors at ESC. There is no need for facilitators at ESC. The districts that run the best and perform the highest that are top-heavy the least. Close ESC and sell the building. The district's own study that the board commissioned said they were way too top-heavy. There is no excuse for saving bureaucrats on the backs of babies; it is unconscionable, and no decent community would stand for it. Only the people that serve students directly should have jobs in a community that values children. The only necessary jobs at ESC are superintendent, payroll, and clerk of the board. Cuts to ESC make all school closures unnecessary, null and void. Sleazy backroom deals only happen when there are too many bureaucrats with nothing to do all day--get transparent. These are completely unnecessary, invented jobs that the surrounding, superior districts simply do not have, and those districts run better. Dr. Doll did not inflate ESC with unnecessary jobs, and he gave us blue ribbon, excellent performing schools because of it. Veteran teachers cannot wait to get away from USD 497, and this is unprecedented. Boost the pay for teachers by \$15,000 like higher performing, surrounding school districts. Teachers are not "the district"; this community values teachers, and the budget should show it. The "listening" sessions were carefully curated to make sure the public had no input, no voice, and there was no transparency from the district. The public has had no input on these school closure decisions, and they never will.   |
| 1/18/2023 20:29:02 | I've always loved Lawrence Schools because I felt like wherever you were in the city that you went to school. You got the same quality education and now it's apparent that we're not very equitable when it comes to east and west side schools   |
| 1/18/2023 20:31:56 | No schools from east side of Iowa St should be closed. Design a survey for students and parents to contribute in identifying low-performing teachers and administrators. Some teachers are exhausted because they take on workload that other teachers are simply not competent to do.   |
| 1/18/2023 20:37:17 | A four day school week will not accommodate societal expectations of 5 day work weeks. This not only causes havoc on families but further creates inequities and likely perpetuates adverse childhood experiences that will have lasting effects on the individual and the community.  |
| 1/18/2023 20:59:29 | Hi! I would like to share that I think the 4 day week/5 day work week could be a positive change for our district. During COVID, there was a time period where my kindergarten students attended school 4 days a week and Wednesdays were remote (though there was minimal contact time, so it was mostly a day off). I saw a positive change in the wellbeing of my students. Having a break from school had a positive impact on student behavior in the classroom. Children don't have a lot of down time these days - they spend long hours at school and some are involved in many extra curricular activities after school. Many students are at BGC until 6 pm and have dance, gymnastics, soccer, etc. in the evenings. We know that young children need more time to play and that extra day off gave them that. Even my students who attended childcare centers or BGC during the extra day off were in a different environment - less structured & more free time. Not only did the 4 day week have a positive impact on my students, but it was life changing for me as a teacher. The majority of our Wednesdays was dedicated plan time! I had so much time to work in my classroom, plan with my team, print copies, grade, email families, make slides for lessons, etc. I almost NEVER worked outside my contract time during this time period. It was incredible! I was able to work only when I was at work, which meant I had a life outside of school. I was more well-rested, relaxed, and happier teacher for my students! I loved coming to work! If I had an appointment I needed to go to, I was able to do it on Wednesdays, which meant I didn't need substitutes as often, spent more time with students, and spent less time writing sub plans. I know the 4 day week sounds scary for parents and I understand that. The district should emphasize that this would actually be a MORE stable schedule - instead of having random days off, parents would be able to arrange for consistent childcare on Mondays instead of dealing with early release every week and a random Thursday/Friday here and there. All that being said, switching to a 4 day week/5 day work week would be wonderful IF at least half of the day on Monday was dedicated to plan time - if it is mostly used for PD, meetings, committees, guided PLCs, etc. it is not a worthwhile change when it comes to impact on teacher well-being. I understand those things need to happen, but think we could make them happen while also giving teachers more than 2 hours of each Monday for plan (what I was told was the proposal). That much extra plan time would be a great draw for teacher recruitment and retention! Thanks so much for your hard work! While i'm at it - smaller class sizes, please! Shawnee mission has decrease K-2 classes to a limit of 22 and 3-5 to 24. Thanks! |
| 1/18/2023 21:07:33 | Is there any way we can use levy money to reduce costs? We could install solar panels to save on electricity. We could install metal detectors to save money on building insurance. What else would help reduce insurance costs? Video cameras or improved fire protection?  |
| 1/18/2023 21:11:49 | Continue to pursue efficiencies with our facilities. Include the district office and the college and career center. Please sell surplus facilities, the capital funds can support maintenance of existing facilities. Do NOT cut CTE courses at the high schools as these classes actually prepare our kids for colleges and careers—and those courses will aid in meeting the new graduation requirements for the class of 2028. When making staff cuts-start with positions that are the furthest away from students.  |
| 1/18/2023 21:13:07 | If you close LMCMS, you will put the most at-risk students at more risk. These kids need stability more than anyone and you know it. The district has failed to support LMCMS. All of our teachers have quit. Why? How can you treat us so unfairly? Why would teachers leave our school for Southwest? It's in the same district! This is crazy. We want equity! We want gifted services! It's completely unfair.   |

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| 1/18/2023 21:54:27 | Why does the Montessori need to be at New York? This is the smallest building. Which schools are closed? Releasing this as early as possible helps families and staff prepare. What happens to PTO funds and other donations if a school closes? Will school closures do away with multiage and help lower class sizes? Or are they on top of the cuts from last year? When will it end? Each year we cut more, close more and still have budget issues.   |
| 1/18/2023 22:02:43 | My son attends what used to be a thriving high performing elementary school in west Lawrence. In the last year, I have seen the 1st grade class size balloon to 25, well over what it should be. I have seen the quality of instruction decline substantially as high quality teachers quit after being fed up and burnt out from what they have been unreasonably asked to do and are replaced by less qualified and less engaged replacements. I have seen the overuse and abuse of video games on iPads as a substitute for instruction for too many hours each week. I have seen 25% of the class or more completely off task for the entire hour I'm volunteering in the classroom because the teacher is too exhausted too disengaged and too overwhelmed to care or deal with them. I have talked to many teachers—including some of the best in the school—who say they are at the breaking point because of the unreasonable asks the system has made of them regarding class size and may quit or leave the system. What I can't figure out is — why? I understand there are budget shortages. But it seems like last year the leadership understood that the right thing for all students was to close some underperforming small schools and send those students to other schools nearby. Why didn't that happen? I hope that Members of the board and administrators who KNEW the right thing last year was to close failing schools and nevertheless decided to delay it by one year will ask themselves: what was the cost of the delay? How many high quality teachers will the system lose forever because of what they were unreasonably asked to deal with this year? How many students will fall irrevocably far behind because of your decision to delay? For what? So that some students don't have to go 5 extra minutes to get to their school? Why is that minor inconvenience remotely equivalent to the obvious and well demonstrated educational losses of oversized classrooms? As a citizen and a parent I am baffled and really horrified as to why you did it—seemingly just to provide yourself with political cover or something? To preserve your personal reputations? At the cost of the education of the students you are supposed to be working for? Anyway, please do the right thing NOW and close the underperforming schools so that all elementary students in the district can have reasonable class sizes. You are paid to be leaders so lead. |
| 1/18/2023 22:20:08 | No 4 day school week.  |
| 1/18/2023 22:21:54 | I now have a classroom of 31 students. I teach 3rd grade. I have no support staff to assist. I have multiple students on IEPs, including one student who needs one-on-one support but does not receive it. I could care less about a raise, make our classes smaller!!!!   |
| 1/18/2023 22:34:41 | I propose a salary cap of \$180,000 for all members of the Lawrence school system. This is a very generous salary, given the low cost of living in Lawrence and puts you at the very top of the income distribution for the whole state. It is outrageous that leaders of our financially strapped relatively tiny public school system are drawing salaries of upwards of \$200k. I do not believe they are worth it. I believe we could do better with replacements willing to do the job for 180k. This job is about educating the children, not about getting rich. How many additional teachers could we hire if we capped salaries at 180k?  |
| 1/19/2023 0:32:51  | I like the idea of reassessing school boundaries. It seems interesting that the lowest census in one elementary school is over 200 students and the highest is over 500. Why is this? If students/parents are allowed to attend whatever school they want (I think that's a new Kansas law or something), how will boundaries be determined? It would be interesting to see how many students currently attend the school they are supposed to. In looking at the graphs of enrollment since 2011, I don't really see a drastic change and we seem to be about the same now as enrollment was in 2011. How did USD 497 end up with 13 elementary schools? Apparently there was a need, at one time, to build so many schools. When was the last school built and what was the enrollment count at that time? 4 day weeks for students/5 day weeks for teachers- just doesn't sound feasible to "save a buck" so to speak, at least for elementary or middle school age. Students need to be in school learning- with their peers! Getting that social interaction outside of the home. Remember what the COVID 19 shutdown did to everyone, especially our youth? If kids aren't at school what will they be doing— sitting at home (alone), watching tv, playing video games while their parents work? High school level would probably thrive on 4 day weeks. It would give the high schooler an extra day to work a job and earn extra income on their off day. Why does USD 497 not do any type of fundraising? Area schools like Baldwin and Eudora, students are always having school fundraisers. How is the largest USD, in the county, the brokest? I just hope Lawrence is able to keep all schools open, class sizes less than 30 and find a way to increase revenue while our students get the best possible education to help them succeed into well educated, hard working and successful individuals.   |
| 1/19/2023 2:48:14  | Budgets are about priorities. Lawrence has too much greenfield development. This has created a vacuum in resource allocations. West Lawrence has not returned this TIF funds and abatement given to the tax. Don't make the mistake of increase educational inequality by closing neighborhood schools which will increase crime and increase the achievement gap. Next, there is too much money allocated to administrators. An elementary principal is not worth a six digit salary. Period. That is the problem. Furthermore expenditures on disability & and special populations are heart felt being but; not rewarded by productivity post K-12. Stakeholders must sit down and go back to the basics. Everyone is not a high school graduate. Everyone is not serious about the mobility to education can provide. Identify those that can be helped and focus resources accordingly. Over  |

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| 1/19/2023 6:39:27 | <p>The item to reduce support staff is concerning. Para support cannot be cut at this point without jeopardizing our ability to fulfill our special education responsibilities. The KS legislature has failed to fund education, squeezing our local budget to the breaking point. However, the legal obligation to provide special education services remains. Support staff play a vital role in providing daily services. Without skilled support staff, the district opens itself to legal recourse by parents of students with disabilities. Cutting support staff and redirecting current staff to special education, while ignoring the needs in the general education classroom, is equally as detrimental, albeit not as likely to trigger legal action. Support for students in the general education classrooms, who do not meet the criteria for special education services, plays a critical role in our equity efforts. Equally as concerning is the item regarding class size. I'd invite anyone who thinks this is a good idea to visit both elementary and high school building classrooms while students are present. First, the rooms are not physically built to accommodate more than 25 students (desks) comfortably. At the high school, these are adult size bodies being crammed into the space. It is similar to the feeling one gets in the middle seat of an airplane. Logistically, this creates a problem. Additionally, having that many students in a class creates these issues: 1) Increased time navigating behavior issues 2) Reduced ability for collaborative work in a small space 3) Makes class discussion and hands-on learning problematic. Teacher exodus is also a concern. Will the district always be able to fill teaching positions? Possibly. Will those teachers be experienced enough to handle the challenges being created by the proposed changes? Probably not. The district is losing highly trained, experienced educators not only because of pay (which is below comparable districts), but because of the school climate. There must be an added lifestyle benefit - 4 day work week - to counterbalance the mental and physical toll of teaching. I understand the impact this would have on families. However, public educators are not babysitters. We are not responsible for taking care of children 8-3, M-F - parents are. If you choose public education, then you are fortunate to have programming during that time. This is not a parental right, it has just been the operational standard. Financial/ labor changes occur that require a change in operations. Perhaps the state legislature could fund programs, that would be available on the 5th day, which provide tutoring support? We could look to European models of education where students are in school for half days, five days a week. It is time for creative thinking that includes lifestyle benefits for teachers, if the budget does not allow for a significant increase in salary. There are too many options for experienced teachers elsewhere to continue on this path. The days of "doing it for the kids" is behind us.</p> |
| 1/19/2023 7:22:24 | <p>To not cut any counselors, SSFs, social workers, or any kind of mental health/ restorative student support from schools. If anything kids in LPS deserve and need more of those supports. Please consider if the 9 million needs to be saved in one year. Can it be over two years or 3? Raise classified staff pay first. As a certified staff I know classified staff make the same or less than what they could at major fast food chains. We do not want to lose good paras to a job elsewhere that pays more. Our kids deserve paras that will stick around because not only do they love their job, but also get paid well. Consider a 4 day week for teachers and students. Are there cuts that can be made elsewhere that would have less of an effect on students other than closing schools? There are many ways to budget, I am sure there are other expenses that could be looked at. Thank you all for all of the work you do. I know making these decisions that will effect so many is not easy. Think first of what is best for our kids and then what will help keep our wonderful and highly qualified educators and staff. Thanks again.</p>   |
| 1/19/2023 7:43:01 | <p>Please do not sanction 4 day week schedule. I am a teacher in 497 and would be very upset by that. Thanks.</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 7:50:18 | <p>What would happen if we operate one middle school building as a college and career magnet school. As opposed to just fine arts, we can offer STEAM learning and have a "pipeline" for students who aren't successful in the traditional classroom to move into the college and career center earlier. It could be a blend of the "alternative" school but also encourage non-traditional learning paths for students.</p> <p>Also, if the plan is to cut the middle school team plan time, then we need the 4 day week to give teachers back that time to complete student GEI within the contract day. The 4 day week would also reduce the number of teacher absences by giving us a guaranteed day to be able to take care of our own physical and mental health without having to struggle with sub plans and finding a substitute. The four day week will also enable us to create stronger educators as a district by providing a more consistent offering of professional learning. If we can't increase our pay to match inflation, time is also a huge commodity.</p> <p>I also hope that there is serious consideration of closing not just east side schools. I saw Deerfield and Schwegler on the list of buildings at under 85% capacity. Closing those schools and combining with Pinckney and Cordley would increase capacity of those buildings and would spread the weight of closings.</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 8:01:19 | <p>Cutting schools is not the answer. If we close schools we will lose more kids. Neighborhood schools is what draws people to Lawrence. I have lived here my entire life, went through many of these schools and my oldest completed her education through 497. I now have my youngest in 497. As an alumni, parent and staff member I feel we need to find other answers. Cutting the number of staff members at the Administration level. (those at the district office) District Administrators are the ones with the highest pay, so doesn't it make sense to cut things there first? There are a lot of students, especially on the east side that have to walk to school because their parents have to work, moving their schools further is not going to help these children or parents it's going to make it harder for them to get to school. First Student is short on bus drivers as it is. I know trying to find more money and making cuts is a hard decision and someone is going to be unhappy no matter what you chose to do and I pray that you all can make the right decision.</p>   |



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| 1/19/2023 8:01:23  | As a teacher in the district, I support a 4 day teaching week with one full day for meetings and planning. We have had a "short day" on Wednesday to meet and plan, however, by the afternoon I feel like I've had a full day of teaching and I'm not as efficient as I am in the mornings. It is for this reason I often come in on the weekend (as do many teachers) which leads to burn out and a less than positive attitude. Most of the teachers I know work much longer than their required time and often take work home (I could have stayed an ISA and made as much money and worked fewer hours). I didn't leave my former profession to become a teacher so I could be rich. However, I would like to feel like I'm being fairly compensated for the work I do. I love the teaching part of my job, I would just like to find a healthy balance between work, home, and mental health.  |
| 1/19/2023 8:07:24  | If teacher retention is a priority, we should be adding plan time at the elementary level, not removing plan time at the middle and high school levels. Additionally, teachers are already stretched as thinly as they can go; efforts need to be made to reduce stress rather than maintaining the current scenario, or worse. A lot of teachers I know are already burned out by big class sizes and forced multi-grade scenarios. Competitive wages and extra plan time won't overcome the existing hurdle of teacher burn out. Questions: what guarantee do we have that these changes will lead to competitive wages for teachers and staff? When will the public be informed of intentions to close/repurpose specific schools and/or programs? Will we have an opportunity to make suggestions for repurposing buildings? Will teachers be required to work the 5th day if a 4 day week scenario is chosen? Will BGC offerings be expanded to include the "5th" day?   |
| 1/19/2023 8:22:54  | 1) The allocation of funds for staffing should focus first on people who have direct contact with students. 2) When projecting enrolment, has consideration been given to the Panasonic plant being built just a short commute away from our community? The completion date is still a ways out. But with the potential to create 4,000 jobs it will absolutely change the shape of our population. (And potentially lure away staff for higher paying jobs.) 3) Can the funds used to buy brand new office furniture, and replace outdated flooring, etc. be redirected for staff or student benefit? Can we repurpose old furniture and supplies more often, and buy brand new things less? Items in buildings do wear out or break and need replaced. But until things level out, can we re-use old items more often? Even if they don't match, or have scratches, or are going in to an administrator's office of conference room. (People with tight budgets don't typically update their décor when they're having trouble paying the bills. Ask nearly any of our classified staff. They can surely give solid advice on how to get by on a budget that doesn't cover all of your needs.) 4) Okay, last one, I promise. Can directors, and administrators, and board members, etc. be required to substitute teach multiple times per school year? It doesn't add to our budget. But it may help them be a little less out of touch with the actual needs of students and staff. (And go to different schools, different grade levels, Sped, BGC, Specials) It will provide a far more accurate depiction than visiting buildings to observe while everyone nervously goes about their job feeling as though they're being assessed. Anyway, it's just a thought. Ya'll have a nice day. |
| 1/19/2023 9:04:29  | Yes   |
| 1/19/2023 9:06:42  | A four day school week puts families that are struggling to struggle even more. Our district already keeps lower socioeconomic families in this bracket with the different start times and lack of buses to get children to school safely. The district office is too heavy and we're paying a superintendent much too much including his stipend vehicle, etc. He makes more than the superintendent of the Kansas City schools. Larger class sizes hurts our children and their individualized attention they may need. Please weigh your decisions carefully.  |
| 1/19/2023 9:24:52  | I support re-purposing schools and re-aligning our school boundaries. I don't think there is any other path forward.  |
| 1/19/2023 9:29:50  | [REDACTED]  |
| 1/19/2023 9:55:58  | There is a discrepancy in the verbiage in regards to increasing classified base pay to \$15/hour. Under Priority 1 it states increasing the base pay to \$15 within 1 to 2 years. But under Finance Belief Statements the goal is to increase salaries 5% within 1 to 2 years. A 5% increase will not get the lower paid staff to the \$15. I do believe properly closing one elementary school is in order but do not believe Woodlawn should be a consideration. This is the only school in North Lawrence!   |
| 1/19/2023 10:15:03 | -4 day student week is much more of a negative for all and could push many more families to leave the district creating a larger budget deficit; to many uncertainty for this as an option  |

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| 1/19/2023 10:17:33 | I think one thing that is important, is for the district to look at WHY enrollment is declining. I always see comments about talking about how things are going to be cut, but no one looking at how did we get in this predicament. I think the budget should also be looked at carefully. As a teacher, I am not in favor of a 4 day work week. Time would be wasted on that 5th day - people would not be working, and I fear that I would have no plan time on those 4 days. Also, a 7 and a half hour school day is already long for the littles, extending that to meet state hour requirements, or even going past those requirements makes for an extremely long day for teachers and students. The students already shut down towards the final part of the day - no matter what level of engagement is there. To put all of this in perspective from my point of view - I grew up in Lawrence and did K-12 here. I went out of state to college and did not return until July 2020. I have taught for 21 years, and 18 of those were in 2 district in Arizona, and 1 in Montana. I have seen how things can be done efficiently, retain enrollment, and pay teachers well. The Billings, MT system would be a great one for the district to reference. It is embarrassing to me that I have taught 21 years, have a Masters, have a wealth of knowledge, yet my pay has increased only 800ish dollars in the 3 years I have been here. This is also a huge problem that needs to be corrected, or the district will continue to lose teachers. I am more than happy to speak in person with people as you proceed forward in this process. |
| 1/19/2023 10:38:03 | A 4 day school week is not something that I support. I would consider pulling my kids from the district if that happens. It will make a mess of the entire district.   |
| 1/19/2023 11:02:31 | As a USD 497 staff member, and also a parent of a 6th grader at LMCMS, I will always be a proponent of neighborhood schools. However, LMCMS must be shut down. It is an unsustainable environment for teachers, and therefore is an unsafe learning environment for its' students. My child's school spirit has been broken this year as teachers leave mid-year in frustration as classroom behaviors dominate their time instead of being able to teach content to the students who want to learn. Think this is an exaggeration? Ask the staff there. They will tell you the school should be closed. Please re-draw the boundaries and re-distribute the middle schoolers equitably throughout the city.   |
| 1/19/2023 11:20:12 | The district is where it is in part because of all the money spent propping up our smaller schools. The committee should strongly consider additional school closures so we aren't faced with this debate in another 5 years. The trade offs aren't worth it - the district as a whole has suffered. Keeping communities afloat should be a city responsibility and not a school district responsibility.  |
| 1/19/2023 11:35:38 | As a secondary LPS employee (LHS), I do not know how 50 FTE could be cut and not be felt in a HUGE way. Our classes at LHS are already overfull in many cases as many of the electives have very small numbers due to student eligibility. There are core classes - some at the AP level - that have 30+ students while another teacher down the hall has 10 or so students. It simply is not sustainable. We are going to burn out some of our greatest staff members if this continues to happen. We all know that core classes get overfilled above the capacity as is, so this is going to create a lot of extra work for many of our staff who are already dragging.  |
| 1/19/2023 12:01:09 | I believe that there are additional ways to save money that have not been considered beyond a 4 day week. The 4 day week would be devastating to families, businesses and potentially dangerous to children. It is possible to cut athletics and activities or combine across schools. It is possible to consider attendance centers (1-3 grade) (4-6 grade) etc. It is possible to annex an area of increasing growth in to the city of Lawrence to be able to count that property tax. Those children often desire to go to Lawrence schools (NW Lawrence). All solutions have not been considered.  |
| 1/19/2023 12:22:20 | Any plans to cut Early Childhood funding is incredibly shortsighted. Studies have shown that every \$1 invested in Early Childhood yields a \$4-16 return on investment in the future. We need to think beyond the immediate term with projected declines in enrollment (and funding) looming. Early Childhood leads to increased reading skills in 3rd grade, improved standardized test scores, and higher high school graduation rates. It also decreases the need of Special Education and remediation services in school-aged children.   |
| 1/19/2023 12:36:03 | It is important that a decision is made immediately. Each of the areas will take enormous amount of time to figure out and implement.  |

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| <p>1/19/2023 13:06:02</p> | <p>These are questions I wanted to put to the committee. They would not fit on post its. How closely have the consultants looked at overlapp of duties in the district in order to streamline positions, maximize efficiency, and minimize bureacracy and busy-work? Does the district budget only go to K-12 programs? If there are elementary school closures will the boundries be designed so that displaced students go to schools with smaller student bodies, giving those remaining schools a better chance of thriving and remaining open? Why did the committee rate schools for closure/re-purposing based only on the building's condition and not on the school's past and present performance? How can the district afford to repurpose schools, and then potentially use them for new or expanded programs when there is a budget crisis? What is the district doing to advocate for greater and more effectively usable funding at the state and local level? Do members of the Futures Planning Committee feel that they, as individuals, are able to have a voice in the proceedings? Who decides how meetings of the Futures Planning Committee are run? Do members of the Futures Planning Committee feel that they have been given enough information to assess recommendations? Have members of the Futures Planning Committee had opportunity to make their own suggestions for budget recommendations, and have those recommendations been discussed and thoroughly explored by district employees, administration, the consultants or the school board? What evidence do district leaders have that the consultants work on the budget is completely unbiased, with no disproportionate influence from any particular group of stakeholders? How are the consultants deciding what to consider and vet as possible budget recommendations? What will parent/guardians do for childcare on Mondays if the district implements a four-day school week? Will that childcare be at the expense of the parents and guardians? If the district implements a four-day school week will there still be a week long Fall Break (one month before Winter Break)? If the district implements a four day school week will school's-out Mondays be used for teacher-parent conferences and other district staff activities that require school to be out of session? Public school is a PUBLIC SERVICE. Last year, under a deadline to balance the budget, the PUBLIC, including district employees, spoke out largely, (nearly unanimously), in support of SIGNIFICANT cuts to central administration. Has that option been thoroughly explored? Do teachers and in-school-building staff have direct impact on cost-cutting recommendations? Are their distinct suggestions actively sought? Are they only allowed to rate the suggestions/proposals of administrators and consultants? I have heard MANY district employees, present and past, whether in public comments, articles, or private conversations, say that they DO NOT feel that central administration has a clear understanding of their day-to-day work, or is supportive of that work. What are central administrators doing to rectify that? How can central administrators and hired consultants know better than in-building employees what we can afford to lose in the name of savings, with the least impact to our students? During last year's lead-up to the budget-balancing deadline, and beyond, there was lots of talk about "thinking outside of the box" to generate savings and funds, to make changes that would not only be cuts, but exercise creative problem solving to find solutions that would create savings, generate funds, and actually add to the student's experience, and school's success. I, myself, wrote the school board with atleast one such suggestion, and never heard back. Has the district put adequate time and resources toward the generation of ideas for change that could both improve our finances and our school experience?</p> |
| <p>1/19/2023 13:30:38</p> | <p>We need laptops not ipads.</p>   |
| <p>1/19/2023 14:52:52</p> | <p>Please make sure that the cuts minimize the direct impact on students' experiences as possible. This includes avoiding cuts to elective courses, extracurriculars, class sizes of more than 25, etc. District office has become so bloated with staffing, and not all of them work to meet federal and state requirements, as was noted as a concern if their positions were cut. I've been in the district for 17 years and when I walked into ESC for a meeting yesterday, I couldn't recognize more than half of the names on office spaces. I couldn't tell you what they do in their position, and none of them were in their offices anyway. That tells me that whatever they do, it does not immediately or directly impact staff or students - if they did, I would recognize them. It's a sad change to have witnessed over the years.</p>  |
| <p>1/19/2023 15:39:08</p> | <p>1. If the district closes and consolidates middle schools, I implore them to do so with an equity lens. Last year when the closing of LMCMS was discussed, the proposed plan was not equitable. The majority of students were slated to be moved to BMMS, which has similar demographics as Central. This would have made a mega middle school on the east side of town, with the highest number and percentage of students in need. It makes no pedagogical sense to warehouse all the under resourced students in one school. If a middle school closes, boundaries for the remaining middles must be drawn. 2. If Central is closed, the district cannot mothball the building. It is a historical building that sits on Mass Street, at the gateway of downtown. It would be terrible PR for the district and the city. If we want to encourage growth on the west side of town, the best way to do that is to continue to close schools on the east side. This is not fair to east side families and community members. The district invested in the buildings on the east side, and it is in the city's best interest for families to continue to live on this side of town. If there are no schools there, families will choose homes in other parts of town or in another city. 3. Last year it felt like the budget was balanced on the backs of elementary students and staff (multi-grade classrooms). This year, many of the cuts are leaning heavily on middle schools. Increasing class sizes, eliminating the team plan and closing a middle school will have significant impacts on the quality of instruction at the middle level. Even one of these cuts will be felt deeply. All three will be hard to swallow, and I anticipate we will see an exodus of middle school staff.</p>  |

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| 1/19/2023 16:06:13 | <p>I am in favor of closing two elementary schools, Pinckney and New York and one middle school, Central. Students from New York could go to Kennedy and Pinckney students could go to Woodlawn and Hillcrest. Central should be closed and those students divided between West and Billy Mills. Central should also be sold. That building is old and requires a lot of expensive maintenance. I would also like to see administrative cuts from the ESC or salary decreases. Why is our superintendent making 250,000.00/year? That is ridiculous! The majority of administrators do not have any student contact. They do not need a six figure salary. If the School board would look at the numbers they could see that even though the district's school population has not increased the amount of administrators has greatly increased over the years. I am NOT in favor of increasing student classroom sizes. We should not be putting more stress on the classroom teachers. Having bigger class sizes hinders the student and the teacher. The district thinks they have a teacher shortage now, increase the class sizes and teachers will go to a district where they will earn a higher salary and have lower class sizes! There is even a chance the teacher will move out of Lawrence, thus impacting the city. Why stay in Lawrence with high housing prices and low pay? I am in favor of eliminating the middle school second plan time. This has been a "perk" for middle school teachers for many years. Having a second plan time is not a necessity nor is there any evidence that can say that this second plan time directly increases student's test scores or learning. Lawrence Public Schools is in a bad place right now. Staff morale is at an all time low. The district is desperate to hire staff, so in turn the new staff coming in to the district are making almost what a veteran staff member is making. All the new staff member has to do is mention they are thinking of leaving and the district increases their pay. Staff that have worked in the district for 10 plus years are completely ignored. Administration simply thinks that the veteran staff member does their job well, there isn't any need to give them a raise. Look at how many staff members have resigned from the district in the last two years. The number one priority needs to be increasing staff wages. Many years ago there were a lot of applications for one job in Lawrence. That is no longer the case. The district is spending a large amount of money on contracted services because the district has so many open positions. For example, the district is having to contract out SLP services. This district will continue to lose staff if they don't increase staff wages!</p> |
| 1/19/2023 17:22:06 | <p>Cut ESC admin. Do we really need a director of everything at ESC? Do we really need an assistant director of everything? Do we really need a PR team at ESC? Do we really need a chief officer of everything at ESC? Do we really need facilitators at ESC with nothing to do, but interrupt the work of teachers? Do we really need learning coaches at ESC with nothing to do, but interrupt the work of teachers? Do we really need an executive director of everything at ESC (when other districts don't have these positions at all)? Do we really need a coordinator of everything at ESC? Other districts do not have an executive director of inclusion, and they seem to be more equitable. Close ESC--so close to I70, it should sell well. USD 497 was at her finest when ESC was smallest. A top-heavy district is always a poor performing district. Class sizes of 30 assure that teachers who desperately want to help kids will never be able to even physically reach them in packed classrooms, who in their right mind would want that for their child, especially with school choice coming?</p>   |
| 1/19/2023 19:02:59 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am not sure why there isn't more of a reduction in administration at the ESC. I would put a big focus on reductions at the ESC before looking at reductions to staff who work directly with students.</li> <li>2. I would eliminate Job Coaches. I have felt passionately about this for years. I know they can be of help to the principals, but feel like often they help do things that are in a principal/assistant principal's job description. Please eliminate the Job Coaches. We need staff who work directly with the students all day.</li> <li>3. If we are losing enrollment, why don't we do more outreach and publicity to bring in more students to LVS. In the past, this has been very effective. Also, why did we stop enrolling students at some grades to LVS at semester? Students coming in mid-semester should not be allowed to enroll. But, at a new semester, it seems like students should be let in.</li> <li>4. Another way to increase enrollment at LVS is to make sure to run the school as a virtual school and an alternative to brick and mortar--not try to make it run exactly like a virtual school. It has been a very successful school for many years as reflecting in its enrollment and test scores. It is important to be sure to reflect on why it was successful and not try to fix what doesn't need to be fixed.</li> </ol>   |
| 1/19/2023 19:37:33 | <p>I know it's not ideal, but I know that it will inevitably be necessary to close 1 or more schools. I would like there to be full disclosure about which schools are being considered, and what impacts will be to ALL schools. In my parent and staff member opinion, it seems that Pinckney is the most logical choice due to some significant staff issues the past few yrs, as well as location. With reduction in staffing from closing any schools, boundaries need to be seriously reconsidered, with input from Building Leadership Teams, and how changing enrollment would effect every school, NOT from some random company crunching numbers. From those IN the trenches. Additionally, looking at how to maximize staffing for smaller class sizes should be a huge consideration. Many schools could potentially benefit from hiring fewer para positions and more certified positions. And Title schools might need to consider if they can use Title funds for more classroom teachers for smaller classes, if possible. A 4 day week could make sense for teacher recruitment and retention, IF childcare is figured out, as well as classified staff hours and pay.</p>  |

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| 1/19/2023 20:16:41 | <p>I would like the committee to really evaluate the best ways to retain teachers. Evening our plan time is helpful, but I'm not sure at the detriment of a school day. A true 4 day work week where the teachers have a full or even a half day completely off of work would definitely be appealing. I want them to know how understaffed the schools already are with many of our IEP students not getting their legal minutes because we have such a hard time retaining and hiring paras as well as keeping teachers. The multi grade classes are a huge mess. In schools that are also title and multi grade, now teachers are working with a larger group of at-risk kids and those who have experienced trauma with more to teach and a wider range of academic skills. These kids are falling through the cracks. Evening out the class sizes across the schools is not equitable, it is the opposite and a disservice to the kids in title schools who oftentimes need much more support than a teacher of 30 kids and two grade levels can. Multi grade was implemented poorly and with little training and the teachers did not have things taken off their plate in order to be successful. I know veteran teachers who are spending hours and hours after school and on the weekends just to keep up with the multi grade demands. We will lose another huge amount of teachers this year and if something (like Danielson observations, interim testing, multi grades, busywork documentation for title, PD, PLCs, etc, ) is not taken down a notch or gone altogether, we will continue to lose teachers and struggle as a district. Our kids and our staff deserve better than what the district is providing right now. A teacher does more for the students than any district administrator does and they should be compensated as such. The district admin should be greatly reduced as we have seen time and time again how too heavy our admin is and how ineffective they can be. Thank you for your work on this committee and I ask you to really consider the vulnerable and at risk kids as you make these decisions. They deserve our best so they can do their best.</p> |
| 1/19/2023 22:08:55 | <p>I would like the committee to consider several impacts regarding school consolidation and changes to the school week. Consolidation creates tremendous issues as many schools slated to combine are on different schedules and the proposed schools eliminate the ability for walking for most students. My family is not alone in that e selected our home lately based on walkability for our children. Adding 100 cars to a school with no parking lot is disastrous. little children should not be asked to walk 2 miles twice a day on our busiest street and sidewalks do not accommodate dozens of kids on bikes. This is inequitable to every child removed from their neighborhood school. Upheaval of traditional school weeks dramatically reduces the ability to entice new families to our community, ensures families will not return from the private schools they sought during Covid upheaval, and highly increases the probability that families will go to new communities. Is this the actual goal? To force families to seek one of the dozens of unnecessary private schools? It's inequitable to every family needing to redesign their life to accommodate this schedule and as usual, impacts the most marginalized the most intensely. It defies the purpose of education that enables our future adults to learn among the various personalities and abilities in their communities. There are so many salaries, positions, and assets that can be adjusted AT THE TOP that should happen before uprooting those the district intends to serve.</p>   |
| 1/19/2023 22:46:49 | <p>Closing schools will hurt students and especially the economically challenged, larger class sizes is also detrimental to students, can we explore the arts school idea?</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 22:50:24 | <p>It was frustrating to ask clarifying questions about the proposal. District administrators I spoke with said the proposals were a 30,000 ft view, yet dollar amounts were assigned to each of these items. Someone had to have put some thought into what specifically would be cut to assign those dollar amounts! I would like to point out that if you cut the 403b that's likely to deter educators from staying. I have concerns about if we move to a 4-day week that hourly employees will actually make less than they do now even if we give them a raise because they'll be working less hours. Administrators that I spoke with said there was no plan for them to have a full work week like they have now. It seems to me that the public said that they wanted the bulk of the cuts to come out of the third bucket (buildings) yet all of the district administrator recommendations were in bucket number one (teacher salary and benefits). The plan as proposed is a repackaging of last year's cuts only this time we're "repurposing" buildings so admin didn't have all the red tape hearings that legally have to occur with closures. I would like to point out that public sentiment also said that we need to cut back on District administration- there was a new six-figure director of equity position that was created in the midst of this budget crisis even though we had someone already in district that earned significantly less whose focus was equity. The cuts that admin proposed to bucket 1 seem very "cuts for thee, not for me" as far as staff go!</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 22:57:22 | <p>Class size, class size, class size! This is from kindergarten all the way through seniors in high school. As a district teacher and parent, I view this as the single biggest factor in so many situations. Smaller class sizes lead to more one-on-one for students leading to strong relationships and stronger academics. Smaller class sizes allow for better classroom management and safer feeling students. Behaviors are more challenging to deal with in huge classes. Behaviors are causing families to pull their students from the district. Smaller class sizes, across the board, should be your number one priority!</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 23:14:47 | <p>If your reduce to 4 days, and if that includes elementary, will you provide alternate care on day 5 or will caregivers be responsible? How are you going to get kids outdoors more? Please consider forest school Fridays to get the kids outside and connecting with nature. This can be an extremely life budget option with extremely high reward.</p>  |
| 1/19/2023 23:47:37 | <p>KU has modeled the way to cut without hurting students in a shortfall. Pay cuts to all making 6 figures. Problem solved. "Our decisions continue to prioritize equity and reflect our commitment to protecting KU's most vulnerable populations," the email said. "As a result, we believe these are the appropriate next steps to ensure KU's health, limit drastic impacts to employees, and allow KU to continue its mission well into the future." <a href="https://www.kansan.com/news/ku-announces-6-month-salary-cuts-to-compensate-for-120-million-budget-shortfall/article_5f96248c-b256-11ea-98da-a71d2fade659.html">https://www.kansan.com/news/ku-announces-6-month-salary-cuts-to-compensate-for-120-million-budget-shortfall/article_5f96248c-b256-11ea-98da-a71d2fade659.html</a></p>   |

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| 1/19/2023 23:51:13 | <p>District leaders, please listen up OPINION JAN 19, 2023 - 11:02AM ERICA HUNTER, LAWRENCE To the editor: Once again, top USD 497 administrators employed the "park in the parking lot" approach to public input Wednesday night at LHS. Public questions and comments were buffered to sticky notes for concerned citizens to input (park) their voices on various boards (the parking lots) — a place where these concerns will stay parked. Listen up, board. The top priorities for our community, as we've said before, will always be 1) students; 2) teachers; 3) neighborhood preservation. Many residents have children attending the same schools their parents and grandparents attended or worked in; historic schools like Grant, Woodlawn, Pinckney, Cordley, New York, Central; historic buildings in the heart of our town in areas that are still teeming with young families. These places with our children's faces in them is part of our longest community legacy. We would rather lose (expensive!) positions that do not directly work in or maintain these buildings or with our kids on a continual basis before losing our neighborhood schools or our champion teachers. We cannot see how the district proposal to close neighborhood schools, double ideal class sizes, cut teacher plan time and go to a four-day week equates to equitable student outcomes or invites great teachers to want to stay or work in Lawrence. There's a ton of great community action plans being generated and shared to solve the equation.</p> <p>The school board should worry about student needs, retaining teachers, preserving neighborhoods and rectifying the budget by improving the community environment and listen up for free. Erica Hunter, Lawrence</p> |
| 1/20/2023 5:43:30  | <p>I am very excited about the committee's recommendation to transition towards renewable energy. This is an instance of accomplishing savings while actually making an improvement; in this case, not only an improvement within the schools, but for the health of our greater community and ecosystem.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 6:19:24  | <p>I am strongly opposed to. 4 day school week, almost every parent has to work 5 days a week and while I understand school is not daycare there is a social contract that has been engraved into our Society, do you expect you doctor to be open 5 days a week? How about your restaurants, how about your mechanic? Let's think about this. Attracting students to the district will also not be appealing with a 4 day school week, families that can afford private school will switch. I will personally be taking my two children out of the district if 4 day school weeks become the chosen option. I understand that boys and girls club is hoping to fill in the gap, who is going to pay for that? Your plans only punish working parents and</p> <p>The underprivileged, shame on you all, but I don't know why I'm surprised. I am beyond disgusted with how this district and this city chooses to spend tax money. It's no wonder we have a hard time attracting things to our city like good doctors and nurses for example.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 6:41:56  | <p>I suggest an 8 period day for middle school to preserve plan times but allow for more sections.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 6:42:48  | <p>I was at a new teacher meeting and could not attend. I am an elective teacher and a parent to a 1st grader. I am new to the district and I miss my PD days that we had in my previous district that were scheduled 1 day a month for the whole day. This would be easier I would think for parents to just plan on that one day a month where they would need to figure out daycare vs. every Wednesday. Teachers have the whole day, so it was easier to be with our collab groups vs. 2 hours we don't get as much accomplished and it is really hard to get much done in the classroom with shorter class periods. In my previous district we also used these days to build out our curriculum modules together in canvas, which I think is needed for teachers to make the transition to schoology. I teach 3 grade levels and have 3 preps and losing a middle school planning period would be really tough for me. With 3 preps and getting supplies ready for my steam or robotics class I only have time to put the lessons in schoology and set up supplies. I use every second of both plans and it still isn't enough to actually get grading done, so I am always behind on grading projects. Not having 2 plan period...this is just a non-negotiable for teachers with multiple preps.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 7:01:53  | <p>I believe it is not feasible for most families to do a 4 day school week. Our society and working schedules of parents is structured for adults to work Monday to Friday while children attend school. I understand the need for the budget constraints however I believe this would 1) cause parents who have financial means to pull their kids to private schools and 2) cause lower income families to struggle with childcare and leave many children unattended on the weekly school closure. I urge the school district to not make this a problem for parents and students and not do a 4 day school week.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 7:25:17  | <p>1. The meetings that were available to gather input felt like theater. There is no better way to prevent folks from problem solving or organizing as a group then to divide them into small groups so they can only see or hear the input of a select few others. Yes, we were allowed to go group to group, but the structure prevented any larger conversation or hearing the answers to questions from others. 2. A 4-day week would be a huge burden for families with working parents and would result in fewer hours for some staff. The relatively small savings do not outweigh these concerns. Families would have to completely rearrange their work schedules for this. 3. It feels dishonest to not discuss openly which schools are considered for closure. 4. While it is important to pay a livable wage to staff, we will never be able to be fully competitive with the wages of larger districts. This is part of working in Lawrence for any field. If you want to make top dollar you commute to the KC area. I work in healthcare and my spouse is in public utilities. We both have the ability to make more in the KC market, but only one of us commutes because there are benefits to working where you live as well. 5. When can we stop having a crisis each year. Last year we went through so much strife and sacrifice with the impression that the district was on better footing, only to be told that now we have to come up with an even larger amount of cuts.</p>  |

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| 1/20/2023 7:31:19 | <p>Please close under-enrolled schools. I'm sure the savings are more than \$300,000. Please cut a few administrative positions. It is wrong that teachers make so little while we have so many administrators that make more than \$100k a year and some almost \$200,000. Do not go to a four-day week; that will only increase child care costs and demand at a time when our community cannot even meet child care needs.</p> <p>The increase of class sizes for middle and high schools are "paper" cuts. They depend upon enrollment and demand for courses and frankly, how many kids can fit into a classroom. It is difficult to schedule courses at Free State now because courses are often closed. Counselors messed up my kid's schedule this year and he had two choices for one hour so he is taking a reduced schedule instead. I would hate for that to be the case for even more students. Thank you.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 7:33:23 | <p>Please make sure to consider how sharing staff between buildings will look if/when we close buildings. We are currently not utilizing staff well because we are making them fill random classes at multiple buildings instead of having a full time staff at one building! When you have a full time- in one building- staff, the ability to help pick up concerns and problems (e.g. sub shortages, content similar collaboration, meetings, etc.) throughout the day/week/schedule is significantly increased. Working at two (or more) buildings is more than double the amount of work and you miss out on important information and opportunities to build relationships with both staff and students!</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 7:36:15 | <p>As a former Lawrence teacher, decentralize the power back to buildings. Eliminate learning coaches and restructure central office so administrative positions are significantly cut. Protect class size so teachers can teach.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 7:42:47 | <p>I would like a four day school week.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 7:47:58 | <p>Teachers would not prefer a 4-day week if that means A) no plan time throughout the week B) a 4-day week instead of a raise C) Having our "plan day" filled with PD</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 7:51:15 | <p>Deep cuts in administration are needed. There is better talent in the individual schools than at the district level. We have too much centralized decision making and procedure writing to the point it neutralizes creativity and individualized contribution toward excellent education. The high turnover rate is proof that there are serious problems with leadership.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 7:54:40 | <p>I would like to see greater cuts at the ESC since we are proposing cutting anywhere from 75-100 teachers and expecting lower student enrollment in the future. Cuts to admin should reflect this as well. As a teacher, I would like a raise but am scared of the cost of it. A four day week would be more appealing - if our four days were like our Mon/Tues/Thurs now (and no early release Wed) and the 5th day could be optional work from home. Then a 4 day week would be great and appeal to teachers. But I do have fear that our 4 day week would be turned into a grueling (no plan, longer days) week and the 5th day would be PD/meetings all day. And that would feel like more work. I just wish we had more details and a plan in place for helping students/families that 5th day. I also think it would be beneficial to poll teachers to see if this option is appealing across the board and would be a possible option to cutting so deeply and increasing class sizes. A 4 day week would be such a benefit (and require less subs overall) that I would be okay with a significantly smaller raise and less cuts. Finally, in terms of school closings - I think the Montessori program should be moved to Woodlawn. All Woodlawn families could choose to stay at Woodlawn. And other families would definitely drive their children across the bridge to fill the school. NY could be closed and those kids sent to Cordley (or Pinckney). And then Hillcrest could close. ELL students could go to one of the other ELL sites and the true Hillcrest kids could go to Pinckney or Sunset. And IF Central closes, I hope that all middle school boundaries will be redrawn to share to burden of closings and make the student population more equitable.</p> |
| 1/20/2023 8:04:40 | <p>The only jobs necessary at ESC are: Superintendent, payroll and clerk of the board. Every other job can/should be eliminated, effective immediately.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 8:10:20 | <p>It is imperative that we prioritize staff salaries by decreasing inefficient school and class sizes. Schools must be closed, class sizes should be equalized across remaining schools, and open buildings must be operating closer to capacity to free up money for staff salary. Every day, we lose good candidates at all levels - classified, certified, and administrative - to higher salaries in other districts and in private industries.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 8:12:08 | <p>As a teacher, classes are too large with the needs of the kids. Even working at a west side school, and over half of my kids are struggling in math, reading, or both, not to mention behaviors. With multi-age classes, the behaviors are left to the whole grade classes which creates unmanageable dynamics and learning is hindered for all kids. Over the last 3 years, learning has been tough, but this year has been the worst by far, over virtual, over hybrid, over last year when we were trying to get back to normal. We are hemorrhaging teachers and without changes to the environment (first and foremost), pay, and visibility within district decisions, it will only get worse.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 8:24:05 | <p>Priorities should be competitive salaries, especially for classroom teachers, and reducing class sizes.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 8:49:42 | <p>1) Consider better educating staff about the 403B reduction- many believe that it is just going away instead of being put into the salary pool. 403B is a huge perk for many staff who are currently enrolled. 2) As we look to consolidate elementary buildings- ratios on class sizes need to be removed and thresholds returned. Multi-grade at the elementary level have been extremely challenging and will only prove to cause more foundational gaps for students and parent concerns for students who are currently in multi grade classes moving forward. (EX: What do we do with a 1/2 multigrade student who is currently enrolled in 1st grade, but with the ratio setting, must be in a 1/2 classroom again for 2nd?) For teachers, that much differentiation is such a challenge with 25-30 students and a new group of 1st graders coming in who need 1st grade skills and a set of 2nd grade students who have already been combo'd. With the consolidation of schools, we should have the ability to add some classrooms back to the schools who had to multigrade to create a threshold option.</p>   |

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| 1/20/2023 8:55:31 | We need to take a long hard look at the status quo of our children's education, and focus more on supporting the community those children live in. My child attends Woodlawn, and having had children in multiple districts across the KC Metro, I can tell you, the community of this school is different and strong. I imagine it's similar at other Elementary schools. Having mixed grades, smaller classes, etc., are certainly one way to help, but I'm certain there are other things that can be done as well to help cut costs as well as keep these important pillars of our community open and serving our students and families. I hope that you all remember to have fresh eyes, and focus on the beautifully diverse communities these schools serve.  |
| 1/20/2023 8:58:53 | School consolidation and consolidation of resources makes way more sense than what my child has endured this year in a split grade classroom. The teachers are a wreck, my daughter's learning has been impacted. The social emotional impacts have resulted in therapy sessions with a private provider. It's chaos and not the level of education I want for her. We will absolutely leave the district and move away if this continues.   |
| 1/20/2023 9:00:12 | I'd like to see a 4 day week, smaller class sizes in Elementary Schools on the West side, take one planning time away from the secondary schools, and keep the classified people that support students   |
| 1/20/2023 9:02:37 | If the school district goes to a four day week or if all elementary classrooms go mixed grade, I am going to pull my kid to go to private school, and I can't be the only one. It's only going to make the problem worse.  |
| 1/20/2023 9:05:56 | The administration needs to be cut in numbers and salary before any other cuts are made. A four day week for 6-12. Last, school closures if needed.  |
| 1/20/2023 9:42:52 | I would like to see a Fine Arts Performing arts magnet school. We have so much talent in this district it would be exciting to have a 6-12 program focused on learning through the arts. We have incredible teachers that would excel in this type of environment. Central would even be a great school for it.  |
| 1/20/2023 9:45:56 | I think the idea of turning liberty memorial middle school into a fine arts school would be amazing for the community and way to get back something to liberty and bridge a gap that's been there. I think often times it gets a bad rep when it has so much potential to be an amazing school for students. With it located downtown near the arts center and other arts it's the perfect location as well. I grew up here in Lawrence and it's always been known for the arts and having the top programs at the schools. I think that is still the case so this could be a good way to keep that going as well as appeal to many families who may be considering going elsewhere for school at the moment.  |
| 1/20/2023 9:47:12 | It's important the board recognizes the importance of middle school plan time. We meet daily to discuss what students need extra support and how we can better serve them. Middle schoolers need the extra support we provide them, but without the extra time to do so, we could potentially have a lot more struggling students. If dropping a middle school plan time is an option, middle school teachers need compensation in return--which doesn't sound like that is happening. We would be teaching an extra section because of this, but not really receiving any compensation besides the raise given across the board. If something so important to us is being taken, we need something given in return.   |
| 1/20/2023 9:48:11 | The plan to take away benefits such as 403b, early retirement benefits, and any other type of retirement absolutely blows my mind. How can you work for someone for years and have nothing in return? Everywhere I have ever worked before I got to contribute whatever I wanted to my 403b or 401k and my companies ALL matched up to 7% of my salary. Here we only get a measly tiny \$60 or \$75 depending on CL or CE a month the way it is and you want to take that away. You think we are short staffed now, take benefits and retirement away and you won't have any staff. People don't want to work for 30 plus years to have nothing in return at the end. Our system already lacks in that we barely contribute anything and is almost a joke/slap in the face. And people that do qualify for the Early Retirement have been working their asses off for years and know when they can retire with those benefits, you take them away now when people are almost to get there and get to retire thinking they have this, again, you are choosing to push staff right out the door. CL staff are not paid crap here compared to many other places. Something has got to be done about this. I cannot even afford to add my son to my health insurance here because I don't make enough money and the prices are ridiculous. That is so sad and this is how it is for many people I talk with in the district. The sports in this school system are a joke already, but yet you want to take away funding for sports. Maybe you all should just learn to hire coaches that know how to stand up to parents and students, make cuts where cuts are needed, and quit having 5 high school teams because you are afraid to hurt someone's feelings and cut their kid. My son quit playing "daddy" ball at 7 years old and teams in our old state cut kids from baseball and basketball as early as that. Not everyone "gets a chance" to play, by time you are in 8th grade and high school, if you have never played before and had no interest then now is not the time to start. Not everyone gets a trophy even though that's what this world seems to have come to. If your kid works hard and earns a spot, then they should be the ones getting to play. No longer let "every kid have a chance", there was time for that the past 10 years and they didn't take a chance. So let's hold our coaches and students accountable and start making cuts where cuts need made and stop spending money on letting 50 extra kids be on a team, buy uniforms, spend money on more kids than we need to. Then lastly, maybe the district needs to start holding people accountable for their actions and start following the rules consistently. Stop making exception after exception for people that is costing us money. Paying for peoples insurance that don't meet their hours week after week after week, people that are not on FMLA and go unpaid for 30 days are supposed to lose their insurance and go to COBRA, but instead exceptions get made and we pay out the butt for insurance. We let staff go or they choose to leave but yet we make exceptions to pay their insurance through the end of their contract. If you let them go, then why do they deserve for us to take on the cost of their health insurance? And then everyone will want these exceptions, because no matter what, you all know how word spreads about these things. |



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| 1/20/2023 9:56:09  | <p>Whether we move to a four-day school week or not, we should shift to year round school to spread out how many students are with each teacher, and lessen or eliminate the learning gap that happens over summer break. We have a (free!) city bus system to help move people where they need to go around the city. Save money by opening up to new ways of counting attendance hours for each student, or the schools can stay open longer during the day to allow for the slower pace of using public transportation. For example, time spent in a library or museum or playing sports could count, academically, like a school-sanctioned independent study. Students could come and go at times that work for them, parents and caregivers would regain time spent driving their children around town, which would lessen traffic and shrink car pickup lines. A policy and resource shift like this also addresses transportation issues that we will soon face when public school choice policies change in Kansas. Programs like the Boys and Girls Club, Lawrence Parks and Rec and perhaps some new types of private businesses will fill in childcare needs with whatever new schedule we land on. Our city library, museums, and rec centers can restructure to gear up for an increased number of visitors coming to their establishments and offer new types of programs. We pay for it with creative accounting and documentation, at the school and school board level. We have the resources to make a graceful shift to whatever new arrangement makes the best sense to optimally use the talent, funding, and resources in our community to meet the needs of public school students in Lawrence.</p>            |
| 1/20/2023 9:59:09  | <p>Whether we move to a four-day school week or not, we should shift to year round school to spread out how many students are with each teacher, and lessen or eliminate the learning gap that happens over summer break. We have a (free!) city bus system to help move people where they need to go around the city. Save bus budget money by opening up to new ways of counting attendance hours for each student, or the schools can stay open longer during the day to allow for the slower pace of using public transportation. For example, time spent in a library or museum or playing sports could count, academically, like a school-sanctioned independent study. Students could come and go at times that work for them, parents and caregivers would regain time spent driving their children around town, which would lessen traffic and shrink car pickup lines. A policy and resource shift like this also addresses transportation issues that we will soon face when public school choice policies change in Kansas. Programs like the Boys and Girls Club, Lawrence Parks and Rec and perhaps some new types of private businesses will fill in childcare needs with whatever new schedule we land on. Our city library, museums, and rec centers can restructure to gear up for an increased number of visitors coming to their establishments and offer new types of programs. We pay for it with creative accounting and documentation, at the school and school board level. We have the resources to make a graceful shift to whatever new arrangement makes the best sense to optimally use the talent, funding, and resources in our community to meet the needs of public school students in Lawrence.</p> |
| 1/20/2023 9:59:59  | <p>I am curious how a 4 day school week with staff reporting 5 days allows for budget cuts when the buildings will be in use? Also, how will this affect our classified employees who are already paid so poorly.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 10:22:40 | <p>Please devote some district admin resources to pursuing 4 day student weeks. Also, if one of the main goals of this work is to increase teacher pay/recruitment/retention, then how would removing a benefit (ie, the 403b) to pay for a raise help? Finally, removing plan time at the middle school and assigning student ratios that have never officially been established without explicitly revealing how many FTE will need to be cut seems woefully ignorant at best and completely dishonest/shady at worst. Please be more transparent where each amount of dollars saved is coming from.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 10:29:41 | <p>I am greatly concerned about the potential middle school closure in regards to LMCMS. I feel that the building itself needs to be preserved due to its historical significance in the community. Additionally, it has a deeper meaning and importance because it has been a Memorial, dedicated to local community members who fought in WWI, building since the beginning of its existence. If it is found to be necessary to go through with the repurposing of LMCMS I hope that the Board is thoughtful, transparent, and purposeful with how the building is used in the future. In order for the legacy of the building to be preserved, it is my belief that it needs to be maintained as a facility that is open and available to the students of Lawrence Public Schools. If the building were to shut its doors to students all together in the future the probability of the building being kept by the District and continuing to be a place of education for all, is reduced significantly. The building is an integral and iconic part of the Lawrence community. Lawrence has an opportunity to illustrate that our community values its history. Maintaining and caring for historical buildings provides future generations with a space that is a living history opportunity to be experienced every day. The historical aspect of this building also builds a greater sense of community pride and connection for students. I urge the Board and the Future Planning Committee to recognize this and consider the importance behind the building's future as a LPS facility that is worthy of being maintained and occupied.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 10:34:19 | <p>I have concerns with the 4-day school week. With a district that preaches equity this is not an equitable proposal. Let's stop creating disadvantages for our community. Please do your research on the 4-day school week. Most benefits are for the teachers and adult staff and not students or families. The disadvantages affect the students particularly those who come from low income families. The school district will continue to lose students from high income families to private schools. We are creating larger gaps in our community with this approach. We have three kids and two of ours are already in private school. We can discuss the stark differences in academics between the two later.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 10:39:57 | <p>If going with a 4-day school week actually implement a 4-day work week for teachers like Independence MO school district is doing. Their applications jumped &gt;400% for teachers that wanted to work there recently. Don't implement a 4 day school week with a 5 day work week for teachers.<br/> <a href="https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/education/article271323852.html?ac_cid=DM751981&amp;ac_bid=1899093683">https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/education/article271323852.html?ac_cid=DM751981&amp;ac_bid=1899093683</a></p>  |

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| 1/20/2023 11:01:07 | Closing schools, increasing class sizes, reducing elective choices, potentially reducing staff numbers, and eliminating district contribution to our 403(b) are incredibly tough to swallow. I'm retiring this year and consider myself fortunate to be "getting out" before these recommendations become reality. It's already hard to attract young people to our profession, let alone our district. I can't begin to imagine what the future holds for our schools and even more importantly for our students' education. What a sad and scary situation we find ourselves in.  |
| 1/20/2023 11:21:30 | I am for closure of schools. Resources are spread too thin and you can consolidate things like nurses, librarians, etc. I do not believe in increasing class sizes.   |
| 1/20/2023 11:22:26 | No input...just a thank you for the difficult work you are doing!   |
| 1/20/2023 11:22:47 | Paraprofessionals need to be a priority including training. There are expenditures that do not relate to educational benefits for students which need to be removed.  |
| 1/20/2023 11:34:33 | The schools on the east side need to close. I realize people have wonderful memories of time spent in those buildings and they are very emotional about it, but the expense is just too high for the amount of students served. Change happens even if it disrupts our sentimental memories when we drive past the buildings. Educational programs need to be preserved and considered before sports. I know we love sports and the public gets involved with sports, but it often winds up with more funding than actual academic courses. Lawrence used to be THE name on everyone's lips in fine arts circles. Art, Theater, Band, Choir, and Orchestra were some of if not THE best in the state. However this requires funding. Just like we want to support our football and basketball teams (not academic) and are proud when they are State Champions, Music and Theater, Speech and Forensics, Model UN, and Future City students are equally proud when they are the best in the state or even ranked nationally! These academic classes and activities require funding as well and should be supported just as much as any sport. Perhaps more since they are actually curricular. Are you aware that our Fine Arts programs are some of the best in the state? They are consistently winning competitions, being chosen to perform at both the state and national levels and often have more students in state level ensembles than any other district in Kansas (including KC and its suburbs.) This requires funding and should be one of the priorities in our budget. Now about teacher salaries. I am a teacher in the district. I live in Topeka and commute to Lawrence daily because I cannot afford to live in Lawrence on my salary. I am a single woman with a teen who lives with me. As a professional who has a master's degree and 20 years experience, I deserve to be able to live in a home or at least a nice apartment. I don't think that is too much to ask! However, on my current salary, even with the added expense of commuting, I live out of town because I can afford it. It seems to me that any employee should be able to live in the town where they work without needing a second income, especially those who have worked to have a college degree (or more than one! ) Part of being treated like a professional is being paid accordingly. I know our district has been hemorrhaging employees, especially teachers, over past few years. That will continue as long as pay in neighboring districts is more attractive. (Up to \$10k/year) Thank you for your time. |
| 1/20/2023 11:35:35 | Keeping all schools open is not sustainable. The board has succumbed to community pressure to keep all neighborhood schools open for far too many years. It is time to do what is best for children in the long run and close LMCMS as well as some neighborhood elementary schools.  |
| 1/20/2023 12:23:48 | Well I think it's kinda BS because it's a lot easier to use computers than ipads. i'm pretty sure a lot of students would agree with me on this and I know it effects the school budget and sense it does we should do a big fundraiser to help support the budget and all of that.   |
| 1/20/2023 13:10:36 | Please consider a fine arts school  |
| 1/20/2023 14:46:04 | I would like to see a Performing Arts School as a possible repurposing of a building in our district. We have so much talent, how cool would it be to have a place for our young Theatre and performing artists to learn in a setting they are comfortable in. The theatre program at southwest middle school has been the best part of my child's experience. It has helped her so much with confidence, motivation, initiative, looking forward to school and helping to fin friends that she feels she fits in with.   |
| 1/20/2023 15:18:55 | There are many open para positions in the district, so cutting the para positions that are currently filled is ridiculously stupid. You are going to overwork a group that is already overworked. The idea of downgrading the high schoolers to iPads would not be a good idea. That's really going to affect the video classes and the newspaper classes. Close schools and look into the district level higher ups and cut the positions.   |
| 1/20/2023 15:44:14 | As long time middle school science teacher, I appreciate the districts efforts to increase teacher compensation. However, I believe that the current leading proposals - to close schools and increase class sizes, and to eliminate the middle school team planning time would result in a substantial increase my teacher work load (more students to manage in class/communicate about with parents/work to grade/social-emotional concerns to deal with, etc) and decline in my work environment (less time to meet with colleagues to plan for and respond to the needs of our ever increasing number of students). Personally, I am thinking this apparent trade off is not in my/our favor, and will likely only work to hasten my/other teachers departure from teaching in this district rather than prevent or delay it!  |

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| 1/20/2023 17:02:06 | <p>When you are closing/combining schools, please be mindful of demographics and socioeconomic status, as well as the status of the affected schools. Billy Mills and Liberty Memorial both have significantly more behavior issues (as evidenced by data) than the other middle schools, and combining them would be a huge disservice to the students and the teachers. I suspect it would also be more difficult than it already is to retain teachers (and students, honestly) in that situation. I also worry that with the rival between the two middle schools and the historical behavior data from both of them, a combination would result in a lot of tension and fighting. I understand that a middle school needs to be closed, but I hope you find an equitable solution and thoroughly think through potential issues before jumping to what appears to be the "easy" solution. Please also be mindful of how families may be impacted by closures/combinations of multiple schools close to each other, such as closing Broken Arrow and expanding Billy Mills. It seems unfair that those families would be so significantly impacted, while west side schools have minimal impact. That seems likely to result in more families with multiple children leaving the district altogether, which will further compound the problem. On that note, I'm fine with 4-day weeks as long as there is a childcare option (BGC?) for the fifth day.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 17:07:35 | <p>When you are closing/combining schools, please be mindful of demographics and socioeconomic status, as well as the status of the affected schools. Billy Mills and Liberty Memorial both have significantly more behavior issues (as evidenced by data) than the other middle schools, and combining them would be a huge disservice to the students and the teachers. I suspect it would also be more difficult than it already is to retain teachers (and students, honestly) in that situation. I also worry that with the rival between the two middle schools and the historical behavior data from both of them, a combination would result in a lot of tension and fighting. I understand that a middle school needs to be closed, but I hope you find an equitable solution and thoroughly think through potential issues before jumping to what appears to be the "easy" solution. Please also be mindful of how families may be impacted by closures/combinations of multiple schools close to each other, such as closing Broken Arrow and expanding Billy Mills. It seems unfair that those families would be so significantly impacted, while west side schools have minimal impact. That seems likely to result in more families with multiple children leaving the district altogether, which will further compound the problem.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 17:34:26 | <p>Schools need to be in session 5 days a week. It will be a hardship for many families. I would choose to move out of the district if this is decided.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 17:37:56 | <p>Do not change to 4 day school week. Such a change would be detrimental to students and families with VERY little financial gain in the broader scope. The document states \$700K saved, but how? I don't believe it. You're still paying the teachers FTE rates even with a 4 days work week. Close an elementary school (or two). It's a tough decision that should have been made last year based on gut feelings for the locations of our students in this town. Now you have the data and the community buyin to support it being done.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 17:43:58 | <p>I am in favor of closing schools and continuing to offer a 5 day school week. Daycare is a problem for me.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 17:49:41 | <p>I am fully opposed to a 4 day school week. This is guaranteed to result in a decline in enrollment of more than double the projected 318 students. The downward spiral will continue, and families will continue to move out of the Lawrence School district and move into the very nearby KC Metro area with many more choices of schools, jobs, and more affordable housing options. I am 100% opposed to this idea.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 17:53:10 | <p>View the current administration and its team. Such as the staff working in the office on Mcdonald Dr. Measure the workload and see if it can be distributed with less people. Last year the board of education had gotten a pay raise. Even though a lot of the issues we face is due to mistakes the board made. Perhaps a pay cut would be a way to help ease the financial situation the next several generations will be facing.<br/>I wouldn't be behind having a 4 day work week. Education is important. Some students can't afford to be missing that day. I wish I could add more. Unfortunately, I haven't educated myself enough to make any further statements at this time. Thank you.</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 17:54:57 | <p>do NOT go to a 4-day school week</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 17:55:54 | <p>As a special needs parent, a 4 day school week would be horrendous. I don't have the childcare options that most parents have due to my son's disabilities. Not to mention, my disabled son needs that education and support:</p>  |
| 1/20/2023 18:02:46 | <p>Busing under the 2.5 miles should be a mandatory requirement for the district if schools are closed.</p>   |
| 1/20/2023 18:10:03 | <p>While I know that budget reductions are necessary, I think adding additional students in the classes is not an optimal plan to facilitate learning. The classrooms are not large enough to accommodate 30 students and are crowded enough as it is. Additional load on teachers may cause the district to add to the teacher shortage. I am a big supporter of the 4 day school week. It gives the students a chance to catch up on work, teachers a day to regroup/ grade and may increase teacher retention and recruitment. Provided it does not create a hardship for parents of young students. Perhaps having BGC available at 2 sites ( east and west side) could alleviate that. And if BGC rented from the school, it could be a bit of ongoing revenue. I would look at electives that you could cut, however, I would keep the shop, and vo-tech classes. For so many students, the core classes are so tough and the vo- tech electives are getting them prepared for more of a career path than a college path. Maybe it is time to really look at closing or combining some of the elementary schools that are not at current capacity. I do not envy those making this very tough decision and no matter the final plan, there will be folks upset. I do have one off topic point.... Is there something that the school district can do about the bus availability for sports activities. These past football and wrestling seasons, the students involved in those activities have missed a lot of curriculum time due to having to leave school at 1pm and sit sometimes for up to 4 hours before their meet, game or tournament because of the buses. It is hard for students to keep up in classes that are consistently missed for bus purposes. I wish you luck on your decisions, I know everyone has the best of intentions. Everyone must give a little..</p> |

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| 1/20/2023 18:17:35 | Going to a 4 day work week will be catastrophic for working households and the people who will be impacted are predominantly women. Do not do this.  |
| 1/20/2023 18:23:50 | The best options for my family would be to reduce administrative pay and positions and to reallocate board payment to 403(b). Do anything that will not impact the student. I think the enrollment projections could change if we were able to retain faculty by reducing class size, not increasing it. I also do not believe that our facilities need that much of the budget for maintenance and improvement, unless it was to add more classrooms to reduce class size. No to 4 day school week. You could eliminate 6 admins or decrease pay to equal what a 4 day school week would save. That has the most negative impact to the community with the least savings. I also know my child would not benefit from a 4 day school week as it would be 1 less day where she is getting academic and social interaction. It would also cause a strain on the community as whole for parents and daycare providers. I think the best option is to reach out to the community and ask for handouts at this point.  |
| 1/20/2023 18:31:18 | The more the district discusses shutting down schools the less people trust the leadership of the district. Instead of talking about saving \$300k from a single school, let's start seriously talking about reducing administration pay and positions. It's obvious that neither the Futures Planning Committee, most of the members of the School Board and the Administration do not care about our students, but only care about their own raises and the money they get from contracts.   |
| 1/20/2023 18:34:59 | Close central. Give teachers more money. Don't cut the budgets at middle school.   |
| 1/20/2023 18:45:12 | I believe the draft budget proposal needs to better lay out the cost savings for closing schools to include potential savings related to utility costs and staffing reductions/changes. Without these, the savings from closures are incomplete and too low and don't align with the other reductions listed   |
| 1/20/2023 18:47:42 | I remain disappointed that the only way the district seems to plan on fixing the budget crisis is with cuts and closing schools. Where are new ideas to interested teachers in staying at USD497 or to bring in new teachers? Why aren't there any ideas to regain the confidence of the community and inspired parents to put their kids back in public school or bring rural kids into the district? Was happy there was finally the idea of going green and investing in solar energy. That something, but nowhere near enough. Lets get innovative! Lets walk the walk and be progressive. Lets sell off old buildings. Yes, we learned a lot last year and know that the income from the sales won't go in the buckets that needs it, but the not paying for those utilities and landscaping would. I'm also not comfortable about the main goal being "capacity." Capacity does not mean quality, efficiency or equal opportunity. Reconsider what elementary schools and middle school means. The old model isn't working. Use buildings more affectively for example focused learning pods of similar age groups in smaller buildings. For example preschool - 3rd grade at Woodlawn, 4th - 6th in Pinkney. There are ways to better utilize the buildings and NOT CLOSE THEM. Closed schools don't reopen. Last but certainly not least, we need to be cutting from the top, not the from the ground. We should pay our teachers more and cut the salaries of all admin that do not work in the schools with our kids by 3%. We could also eliminate more that 1district admin, even reducing by 2 would apparently save of 250k. We can do better than this! |
| 1/20/2023 18:55:03 | I know that Woodlawn is probably one of the schools for possible closure, I would just ask the committee to really think about a school that has such a high percentage of indigent students - to think about how those students are going to be transported across the river and how they are going to have after school care. The neighborhood that Woodlawn serves is predominately working class, relies on after school care and has limited transportation means. These kids lives are already chaotic. Please think about how this could affect that for them.  |
| 1/20/2023 19:10:05 | More cuts need to be made to administration. The public has asked for this continually and the people hired to act for public fail to do as we ask.  |
| 1/20/2023 19:15:49 | I was formerly a teacher at West Middle School and Sunflower Elementary. After 9 years of service to Kansas students (3 of those years in Lawrence), I had to leave the district and the profession altogether due to the high stress level for minimal pay. As you consider budget reductions, I urge you not only to maintain the extra planning period provided to middle school teachers, but to also create extra planning periods for the elementary and high school teachers as well. With the high rate of teachers leaving the profession, it is crucial to create more planning time rather than take it away. -Kendall Patterson  |
| 1/20/2023 19:23:24 | I believe in a 4 day schedule for students but that would be Monday through Thursday. Parents have work obligations, meetings, and most businesses understand when employees take a long weekend which would mean Friday off. Mondays are planning days for workers. I understand that would be great for Teachers but not families with kids at home. Also I'd like to see attendance data ... students take off more Fridays than Mondays so they need to be in school Mondays.  |
| 1/20/2023 19:27:14 | None of it makes since. We should be hiring more teachers and giving students smaller classes. Find other ways such as higher ups pay and do pay cuts, and switch around the money to give the teachers and students more. A 4 day student week won't work for the average parent, and then you will lose even more students with a lower enrollment because student will not be getting the enrichment or education they need.  |
| 1/20/2023 20:19:11 | The district needs far fewer administrators  |
| 1/20/2023 20:27:20 | Smaller class sizes and salary increase for Paraprofessionals  |
| 1/20/2023 20:29:19 | Please do not increase the number of students in the classroom. Please do not eliminate teacher planning times. I'm cool with a 4-day school week, but for the love of everyone, PLEASE DO NOT CUT TEACHER PAY. THEY NEED PAID MORE.   |
| 1/20/2023 20:58:35 | I think going to a 4 day school week for students will cause a tremendous burden on many families. Where will the daycare for those students come from? There are too many administrative positions that could be eliminated. Start at the top eliminating positions instead of the bottom (schools).  |

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| 1/20/2023 21:31:57 | Consider the heat density map for ages k-5. It shows growth in comparison with older aged children. It seems vital to the north Lawrence community that they keep an elementary school within their growing community of your people.  |
| 1/20/2023 21:33:49 | Be mindful of parents accommodating if school days change. Daycare is hard to find unless BGC is open on the day off. Consider keeping kids at home schools. Schools need more para support. My school is the same size at my own kids' school and we have 25 paras. The Lawrence school has 4. Big problem.   |
| 1/20/2023 21:34:47 | Please no 4 day school week. Makes it hard for families with younger kids. I think closing schools is a good option. I also want to make sure the teachers pay and needs are met. We need to keep teachers in our district. Please do not overwhelm them with packed classrooms.   |
| 1/20/2023 21:42:21 | Of all the proposed budget reductions, moving to a 4 day school week is absolutely not feasible or fully thought out. Many (if not most) parents cannot manage having their kid in school only 4 days a week. There is already a childcare crisis in this city, and this would only add to the problem. If the school district plans to have some sort of stop gap to provide care for children whose parent(s) cannot stay home with them or who cannot afford or find childcare, have those costs been factored in to this "cost-saving" measure? Honestly, if USD 497 switches to a 4 day school week, my family will be leaving Lawrence. I would not be surprised if other families do the same. It will only exacerbate the enrollment problem. That being said, if the school district opts to close schools are they prepared to provide more transportation? My kid's school has been one of the schools listed in the past for potential closure, and we would not qualify for busing to either of the formerly proposed new locations because we live "just close enough." Does anyone honestly expect a young child to walk 1.75 miles each way, including over the Kaw and across two very busy streets? I don't. How will the increased traffic be handled around the schools when every parent is driving their child to school?  |
| 1/20/2023 22:02:38 | Reduce more administration positions.  |
| 1/20/2023 22:17:24 | Is the board trying to save a certain amount? That was unclear to me. Additionally, why not do fundraising rather than solely reaching a budget based on cuts? My concern with a 4 day schedule is that families with means, especially with two working parents, will work to transfer their kids to private schools or Perry school district, thus increasing the problem rather than solving it. If equity is an overarching goal, I'm concerned how the 4-day schedule falls under that goal. It seems to create child care and food security challenges.  |
| 1/20/2023 22:45:18 | In these unfortunate circumstances, it will be necessary to close facilities and find savings in facility utilization. Hopefully that will allow for staffing positions to be eliminated with a minimal impact on students in the classroom. I support the elimination of some planning time. All I know is that schools are already working with very minimal staffing and are unable to serve the high need families in the school effectively. Please consider this.<br>I also feel that if we adopt a 4day schedule, this will be very similar to the pandemic, where the families at the highest risk will suffer the most. People have their jobs five days a week. The effect of a 4 day week will be very uneven across socioeconomic status. We can't rely on BGC for all of these families. It will be a hardship.   |
| 1/20/2023 23:27:07 | Please do not reduce para support. My child is currently in a class of 29 children and one has special needs. Once a week, this child throws furniture across the classroom as well as a mental breakdown. This results in all 28 children having their day disrupted to accommodate this ONE CHILD and it's not fair. My child's instruction time is reduced to deal with this child who does not get better.   |
| 1/21/2023 2:38:21  | As long as y'all don't cut programs that students actually need & can learn from.  |
| 1/21/2023 6:12:49  | When discussing changes of the school calendar, please consider what alternatives for childcare are available in the community for working families. If parents have to reduce work hours due to school calendar changes it can have wide effects across the community. Thank you for your work.   |
| 1/21/2023 6:21:18  | I recognize the strong need for budget reduction for USD 497, and I appreciate the School Board's commitment to increasing teacher pay and benefits. Our teachers are our greatest assets. While increasing the ratio of students per classroom clearly must happen because the majority of savings occurs from that proposal, that is the recommendation I am most concerned with, especially for elementary students. My children have been in large classrooms with such disruptive students that the classrooms have to be evacuated regularly. The classroom disruptions, and the chronic stress that they cause for students, is the most disruptive thing that can be happening in a learning environment. These types of situations are better mitigated by smaller class because teachers can attend to each student better and because smaller classes are less likely to have multiple students with disruptive behavioral patterns. I recognize the appeal of a four-day school week to teachers and students. I think my children would benefit from this, but I think it is inequitable for families who require childcare every day of the work week and who do not make enough money to absorb the extra costs of Boys and Girls Club on the fifth day of the week. While we recognize that school closure is likely inevitable, personally, our family does not want to see LMCMS closed. It is our neighborhood middle school, and our oldest child was able to bike to school. Because Billy Mills is south of 23rd St., we do not believe that it is safe for our children, who lives north of 23rd, to transport themselves across the busy intersections of either 23rd and Massachusetts or 23rd and Louisiana to get to school. We have a neighbor whose 10 years old was hit and run over at 23rd and Massachusetts and life flighted to Kansas City several years ago. She survived, but incurred lifelong injuries. We do not believe these are safe, intersections for children to cross on their own. |
| 1/21/2023 7:20:29  | Closing schools while impact housing value is necessary to balance the resources ensure proper education to all kids in Lawrence   |
| 1/21/2023 7:45:08  | I strongly feel you will regret reducing any benefits or salaries for faculty and staff. We have many quality people and they will leave for a district that values them. Consider 4-day week.   |

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| 1/21/2023 7:48:14  | <p>I am very concerned about the proposed reduction in curriculum (such as 4-day school) for the following reasons: 1. How time will be made up: this has not been made clear. Also from a scientific research perspective, it is now clear that foundations in elementary school impacts students abilities to keep up in 5-12 and beyond. From experience in teaching in STEM in higher ed., it is also clear that students from school districts with more financial health perform better in classes, as they have more access to resources, training and interventions to support their learning. 2. This proposal does not seem equitable on multiple levels:</p> <p>1. For students with IEPs and also enrichment plans, as well as for all students: continuous learning is important. Reducing instruction time, pushes that need on to parents. Not all parents are equally able to provide this support, which again impacts students in an inequitable manner. This is especially true for students who need additional interventions (counseling services, behavioral plans, additional learning help, etc.).</p> <p>2. The proposal indirectly supports only one kind of family structure: two parents but only one parent working outside the home, or single parent working outside the home with enough resources to support child-care. While schools are not child-care, as the pandemic has shown, keeping schools open impacts parents ability to work outside of the home. The pandemic related school closures (which were necessary at the time) have also shown that this effort has inequitable impact on the workforce: women left the workforce at a higher percentage than men , to care for children at home. Alternatively, children will be asked to take care of younger siblings at an earlier age, as working parents with budget woes navigate this new landscape. 3. Unless most other businesses move to 4-day work weeks, pushing for 4-day school week will impact families very differently, and force parents with work commitments outside of the home, and especially parents of young kids to reevaluate their ability to have a source of income (in some cases only to give it all up in child-care). This will impact parents with younger kids more.4. For parents with concerns about the instruction time, this will cause them to take their children out of the public schools for private schools or home-schooling, which will ultimately have the impact of lower enrollment in schools. Of course, this option also bring out the equity issues. This option is only affordable to some parents, bringing out the socio-economic divide in the school district. Last but not the least, we are in a school district with an excellent School of Education. Before making decisions like this, it is imperative that we ask research scholars in the area of elementary /K-12 education and child development, how longer days, reduced instructions etc. impact long-term learning and academic performance in later years. KU also has scholars who study equity in K-12 education. Please ask them for feedback. Claiming that the proposal for instruction reduction is "equitable" , with the information that has been shared, is certainly not true right now. Even for a non-expert scholar like me, who only works to implement inclusive pedagogy in higher ed STEM education and therefore knows the equity aspects only tangentially, it is quite clear that no thought for inclusion of diverse needs of students was considered, at least based on the information that was shared. Interestingly, the response that we will have Boys and Girls on the off day from school clearly indicates a lack of understanding of all the different kinds of resources and interventions (both micro and macro) that schools provide to students with diverse needs , beyond just the classroom, and how that will impact students and also families differently.</p> |
| 1/21/2023 8:05:35  | The move to a four day week would be a very bad decision for Lawrence schools. Please remove it from consideration! Perhaps instead the committee could consider the disproportionately high number of administrators at the district office?  |
| 1/21/2023 8:08:36  | The 4 day work week would be detrimental to families that have both parents working. After school childcare is already so expensive and would hurt all middle and lower class families.  |
| 1/21/2023 8:46:19  | I find it quite alarming that research for decades has shown smaller class sizes to be beneficial for students, yet we are pushing 30 kids into rooms with very little space to move around. Large class sizes in these studies were 24+. Again, in the studies TWENTY-FOUR was considered a large group at the elementary level. So we are packing them in and cutting support staff. It's no wonder parents are fleeing this district.   |
| 1/21/2023 8:46:28  | I am in favor of a 4 day school week   |
| 1/21/2023 9:11:46  | It's insane to be thinking about four day weeks, I can't believe that you are toying with our children this way  |
| 1/21/2023 9:37:53  | I don't think going to 4-day student week is the answer. Even if you implemented child care services, I'm sure there would be a fee involved. It would negatively impact middle class and low income families. Especially if they have more than one elementary aged child. And I think there would need to be ample opportunities to include as many kids in the program who need it. With BGC enrollment for example, you've got to be prepared for enrollment or you may not get it.  |
| 1/21/2023 9:59:34  | 4 days a week is not good for kids or parents. Students need to be in school.  |
| 1/21/2023 10:28:51 | In response to "The Board typically applies the same percentage increase to certified and administration." Administration does NOT need a pay raise. A substantial pay raise should be given to teachers and paras with a DECREASE in pay for administrators at the District building (not Principals).  |

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| 1/21/2023 11:10:29 | The increased staffing ratios make sense as long as they are well thought out. For example, if there are decreased electives for high school, I hope the decisions of what to offer ebb and flow each year based on what students indicate they are interested in via enrollment requests for classes. The increased middle school ratios are concerning due to ongoing and escalating behavioral concerns being reported by my student and on social media. The elementary schools staffing pay increases need to be considered with accountability, the para staff and teaching staff that I have witnessed this year were terrible - unengaged, disrespectful, demeaning. Teachers and staff should be paid more, but only if they are held better accountable for their own behavior. It is no surprise to me that elementary school students go on to middle school with behavior issues if they are consistently treated the way that I have seen and heard them treated by staff. Building utilization and the student heat density indicate closing at least 2 elementary schools. This is favorable over a 4 day student week as far as equity is concerned for the entire district. Our work society is based on children being in school 5 days a week. We cannot rely on BGC to make up this difference. |
| 1/21/2023 11:24:08 | Please prioritize class size and the needs/demands on working parents (minimize days off/shortened school days).   |
| 1/21/2023 11:34:24 | Moving to a 4 day school week would just destroy the school district. If you think the numbers are declining now, there would be a mass exodus. The only thing that would slow it would be the limit of how many students the local private and neighboring public school districts could handle.<br>[REDACTED] I used to tell people Lawrence schools were great, I can't do that anymore. With the tax base in Lawrence there is NO REASON we should not have the best schools and teachers in the area, and the failure to do so goes directly to the top.<br>Sincerely, Jason Holzmueller  |
| 1/21/2023 12:03:10 | I think LMCMS should be closed.  |
| 1/21/2023 12:59:36 | Could we put something on the voting ballot for Lawrence citizens to vote on to see if they would support an increase in property taxes or something similar, to keep schools open and help support the budget shortfall?  |
| 1/21/2023 14:18:47 | Do not take away middle school teachers plan period or we will lose our veteran teachers! Given them the time they need.   |
| 1/21/2023 14:27:52 | Sell ESC building, move district admin into one of the unused buildings, make cuts at admin level, give teachers a fair raise, and keep MacBooks for high schoolers  |
| 1/21/2023 14:43:15 | Four day school week will not work. This hurts a variety of families in so many ways. Personally it would put financial hardship on our family.  |
| 1/21/2023 15:21:29 | I'm a parent in the district and former elementary school certified staff member who resigned at the end of last year's school year. The proposals do not include significant changes at the district level administrative positions, i.e. reducing the superintendent's salary, as well as the rest of the administration at the ESC who do not have a direct impact on students. The public should have a clear understanding of what these proposals would mean as far as cost cutting is concerned. I worked for the district for the last 5 years and can confirm that cutting classified staff and increasing class sizes will only negatively affect students and teachers. Closing buildings may only save \$1 million but what else can be done to have minimum effects on staff and students who remain? All 3 of the proposed cuts seem to favor the comfort of the higher administrative positions and do not take into consideration the need for more cuts at the ESC.   |
| 1/21/2023 15:22:22 | How does the college career/academy fit into the scheme of all of this? We have seen no data which includes that facility in the mix with the 2 high schools. Does it operate with a deficit, how is enrollment, class sizes, etc.<br><br>I see that 2 electives from each high school to be cut as part of the proposal. Does not college and career have electives that pull students from LHS/FS? Are electives at CC also being considered in the proposal for cuts?   |
| 1/21/2023 16:29:31 | Working parents cannot manage a 4 day school week. That is not feasible for most families! There aren't enough options for childcare anyway—let alone any reasonably priced ones. Please don't support that option.  |
| 1/21/2023 17:21:46 | Moving to a 4-day school week is something I strongly oppose. This negatively impacts working parents and especially disproportionately affects low-income families and those who don't have access to family care locally. The cost of additional childcare could be prohibitive for so many families. Further, kids who are already at risk or who struggle with nutrition access will have even more time away from a stable school environment. If the district moves to a 4-day school week my family will strongly consider other schooling options including private school or moving out of district. I understand schools may need to be repurposed or closed. I ask that this decision be made sooner than later. As a parent with kids in one of the schools likely to be "repurposed" I need time to prepare my child and to consider whether we want to try and move to a different school's boundary area. We love our school and I know transitioning will be extra hard for my kiddo who already has special needs.  |
| 1/21/2023 18:35:56 | Please do not down grade the high school students' MacBooks to iPads. That is not doing them justice when it comes to being prepared for the future, specifically college.   |
| 1/21/2023 18:36:53 | Please do not down grade the high school students' MacBooks to iPads. That is not doing them justice when it comes to being prepared for the future, specifically college.   |

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| 1/21/2023 18:37:42 | Please do not down grade the high school students' MacBooks to iPads. That is not doing them justice when it comes to being prepared for the future, specifically college.   |
| 1/21/2023 18:47:17 | Lawrence Schools already have a shortened student contact time that puts a burden on families. To go to a 4 day week would increase that and what happens to the work time for teachers on Wednesday afternoon?  |
| 1/21/2023 20:01:15 | The whole process has been opaque. The PowerPoints are unhelpful lists of possible things that might be done. The public discussion sessions have not fooled people into thinking this is a democratic process. Why not put the plausible budget saving options to a vote of parents?  |
| 1/21/2023 20:13:42 | I am not in favor of a 4-day school week. For families where both parents work full-time jobs where neither job is in the Lawrence School District, it creates child care problems for families particularly with elementary or middle school aged children for the 5th day of a normal week during the school year. There is not enough care available to these families at a reasonable cost. If a 4-day school week were to occur, there would be tremendous demand for care on that 5th day, which means the cost for that care would likely be too expensive for most families. Would ask that the 4-day school week be dropped from consideration. If the 4-day school week occurs, we will pull our 4 kids out of Lawrence Public Schools.  |
| 1/21/2023 20:30:26 | It would be nice if they considered all the cuts to classrooms and teachers who actually work with the students and think about how they can cut some of the cost from the administration who do not directly effect the students. The blended classroom are so much more work for teachers and the fact that the title schools have much bigger classes then they used to and it is so much harder to try and fill the gaps for these students when there are so many of them and so few supports in place. We only have 2 title teachers and 1 interventionist and her position is over after this year. It just makes me sad, we moved her to go to the Lawrence school district and now it seems like it is one of the worst districts to work in and horrible for the students that are not on grade level. It is just very sad that we have a university that has a great education program in the same town and yet we can't recruit teachers b/c of the low pay and overbearing exceptions on teachers.  |
| 1/21/2023 21:00:34 | When considering 4 day school Weeks; please consider making the day off a Monday or Friday.  |
| 1/21/2023 21:41:21 | My primary request is to keep Broken Arrow Elementary open   |
| 1/21/2023 22:20:38 | Close at least one elementary school; perhaps consolidate a middle school with elem (West and Sunset; Cordley and Central; SW with Sunflower; close and sell ESDC and move to a closed school; cut central admin; embed some central admin staff to schools)   |
| 1/21/2023 22:41:53 | Prioritize reducing technology in the schools, reducing the technology budget by offering less devices. My children have found both the ipads at the middle school level and the laptops at the high school level a major distraction from learning that cannot be well controlled by teachers. They seem like a very unnecessary expense for the district. Ipads at the grade school level are completely unnecessary and just create screen addiction issues for teachers to manage. Second priority for budget cuts should be administrative staff. Staff positions that do not directly work with students or directly maintain facilities need to be kept to a strict minimum and salary cuts to administrators should be considered very seriously. You cannot fix the problem of low paid teachers, understaffed schools and underutilized buildings by adding more admin staff. Closing schools should not even be considered until several levels of admin staff have been purged first. Keeping all current schools open should be the highest priority of the district. Creative timing solutions are a great way to approach balancing the district budget. I'd be in favor of moving to a 4 day school week. Shortening the school day would also be an acceptable solution. A school day that goes from 10:00-4:00 would be ideal for my family and I have heard many discuss the option of a later start especially for teens. Thanks for all the work you are putting into taking care of our schools. We really appreciate the opportunity to share our views. Lawrence can be stronger by honoring all voices. |
| 1/21/2023 23:16:57 | I REALLY don't think we should close anymore schools. It's so heartbreaking for our community and students to lose their local school. Is there anyway we could see about sponsorships to fundraise? Is there anyway we can look into the energy and renewable energy ideas? That doesn't look like it's been explored to the fullest. We need MORE funding for our staff and at risk children not less! How can we increase funding without cutting and cutting? This only makes more families want to join the private institutions and take their kids out of public school. We need more money for teachers and staff. We need to bring people in and not turn more out. There is no reason for our district to not be thriving if we invested more into our children They are quite literally our future, we owe it to them!  |



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| 1/22/2023 8:02:49  | <p>I have two kids in the district, a 6th grader and a 4th grader. Our family planned our kids' education, and the ownership of our house, around an idea of neighborhood schools that we took to be a promise from USD 497. The District asked us to vote for major spending packages, and we did. We bought fully into the idea of remodeling these schools and have been very happy with the results, and our experience with the District has been a positive one. I know there are now financial troubles and it is difficult to support the number of schools we have, and some are not operating at a high capacity. Our teachers and staff are amazing, prices for everything are on the rise, and they badly need raises. I've never believed it was okay to pay teachers less in Lawrence just because everyone wants to live here, so I applaud these efforts to fix that problem. Our family can live with most of these scenarios proposed by the District and the FPC. Some would hurt but we could do it. Four day week, I'm okay with. Not thrilled about the staffing ratio change proposal, but that could work, too. The Montessori program at New York School is exciting. I wonder if more ideas like that at some of the other elementary or middle schools (STEM, arts, languages, etc.) might also help. Closing schools should be off the table. I can't believe we are even talking about it again. We sunk millions of dollars into these schools, they are basically brand new, and to close them now, so soon after we spent all of that money, just boggles my mind. It would reflect such a profligate use of public funds that I don't know if I could ever feel good about voting for anything the District asked for again in my lifetime. It would be a broken trust with the public. And that's just the money piece. The equity part of it is even worse, to my mind. Population and economic opportunity in Lawrence moves west to the more affluent parts of town, and we just shut down the schools in the neighborhoods that are struggling, where most of the people of color live? Educational opportunities leave those part of town, too. Broken windows, boarded up buildings, and what else--a big old empty school, just sitting there. That's what it looks like. In Lawrence, KS? Where we talk about equity and social justice every other sentence? I don't know how we could ever trust the District again if you decided to close schools now. It would be two broken promises--the colossal waste of money represented by pouring so much of it into school remodels and then closing them only a few years later, and the hollowness of the District's equity message that would be revealed by closing schools in the lower income part of town just to save a few hundred thousand dollars every year. I saw in the paper Dr. Lewis said he wishes to set the District on the right financial track for the next 30 years, something along those lines. Well, school closures now would create the kind of bad faith with the public that it might take 30 years for USD 497 to recover from. It feels like a generational moment to me. Before I moved to Lawrence, I lived in a community where the people didn't believe anything the school district told them, and didn't approve bond issues they proposed to improve the schools, because the people running things had lost their trust decades earlier. I can't believe we would let that happen here.</p> |
| 1/22/2023 9:17:08  | <p>I recognize that closing schools is a difficult choice. But after failing to address this issue in recent years, I hope that it will be given serious consideration. Given the budget realities closing some schools seems an unavoidable part of any serious plan to stabilize the district. That's especially true given the downsides of the other recommendations, which will be difficult to implement without negatively impact students. Larger class sizes and fewer elective courses at the MS and HS level in particular are very unfortunate outcomes (and those come on the heels of losses we've already seen to Latin and more). I am very skeptical about the 4 day school week schedule serving students well (and aware that my rising junior at Free State would be looking at a navigating yet another daily schedule shift, the third in three years). Without the building closures, I can only imagine that the student experience and outcomes in our open buildings will be further degraded. In addition to building closures, I hope high cost, low participation activities such as gymnastics will be reconsidered.</p>  |
| 1/22/2023 9:22:28  | <p>Providing iPads to high school students instead of laptops is not a good way to save money. When I was a PARA and was provided an iPad instead of a laptop, it made keeping track of behavior data and helping students with their assignments near to impossible. I can't imagine what it's like for a high school student who doesn't have their own technology as a backup to maneuver efficiently and successfully through their classes. I remember Google Classroom being harder to use on a iPad, and that is a pretty basic platform. If students are using something more complicated now, I feel for them. I propose the District administration making a 6-figure salary take 10% across the board pay cut to help make up for the budget deficit.</p>  |
| 1/22/2023 10:06:17 | <p>Please move forward with closing the elementary and middle schools with declining enrollments so that the growing schools can continue to grow and provide good education. At Quail Run, please RESTORE funding needed to pay for our gifted/talented teacher to remain exclusively at Quail Run. Part of the mission of public schools is to recognize talented students and make sure they are being challenged in the classroom. QR cannot do this without a FULL TIME gifted and talented teacher. This year, for the first time, because of the failure to close other schools, the budget made it necessary to SHARE this teacher with several other schools. The result is that gifted students are NOT getting the services they need. This may prevent these students from achieving their potential. It may also lead these students to LEAVE the public school system -- as their parents recognize that, in order to give the students the education they deserve, they have to look elsewhere. It is in the LONG TERM best interests of the public school system to INVEST in gifted and talented programming so that these students and families STAY in the public school system. Everyone will benefit from this. These gifted students HELP their peers learn and boost the reputation and scores of the school -- making more families want to send their students there. It's a win-win-win -- but it will turn into a lose lose if you do NOT invest in gifted and talented programming.</p>   |
| 1/22/2023 11:02:37 | <p>I largely trust to committee to make recommendations and the Board to make decisions that will best lead to student outcomes. My only real concern with the proposed budget reduction strategies is the shift to a 4-day school week. This shift would put an undue burden on families and is likely to negatively impact the district's non-salaried employees. While I understand the 4-day week has been implemented in other districts across the country, I am unaware of implementation in districts like ours and would definitely want to see evidence that these shifts led to better student outcomes before this proposal was even given consideration.</p>   |

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| 1/22/2023 11:25:30 | I do not support a four-day school week. This creates challenges for parents who need to work. We have too many elementary schools in this district given the demographic challenges that are irrefutable. Older buildings need to be closed and/or repurposed. The population has shifted west and the elementary schools are located in the east of the city.   |
| 1/22/2023 11:46:54 | *Changing the school week to 4 days seems to be the least tenable option in the draft proposal. It seems like it will: -shift teachers' stress to 4 days instead of 5, - create additional stress for families who are not able to accommodate the change, -drive families who do have resources to look for other options from the district, further decreasing enrollment. *If elementary schools are closed, which does seem to be the best option for a substantial cost savings, student to teacher ratios must be re-evaluated so that the potential benefits of combining schools are fully realized   |
| 1/22/2023 13:08:10 | A four day school week is ridiculous  |
| 1/22/2023 13:27:03 | A four day week is ridiculous for students. That will be detrimental to their learning as well as present a hardship for families needing care for that day off for their kids.   |
| 1/22/2023 13:49:16 | Not only should the district consider swapping MacBooks for tablets at the high school level, but the 1-1 device ratio for elementary students should be revisited. State assessments and other standardized tests that require devices are not done in a more efficient, better way. Go back to carts.   |
| 1/22/2023 14:33:58 | The draft proposal is confusing, includes misspellings, and does not present a breadth of data or creativity. In other words, it is not a convincing argument. Even if a proposal is unpopular, a thorough amount of detail will help people accept the outcome. The consultants and district have failed in providing those details even to the Futures Planning Committee who are therefore unable to serve as ambassadors to the public on this proposal. We need to see the MATH calculations used to determine all savings. What numbers are used and where are they derived from? Provide the public with a spreadsheet with descriptions of calculations and formulas included. Because there is so little trust between the district and the public, TRANSPARENCY is the most important. We need to see potential savings for MANY more scenarios – including all of those in the fall public survey, and those submitted in the public input sessions on Jan 17, 18. Then the Futures Planning Committee should make a prioritized recommendation to the Board. Examples of other scenarios to calculate: a) Grade centers: such as K-3, 4-5, 6th grade only, one high school as 9-10 and the other as 11-12 (some of these were included in the fall public survey) b) Moving 6th grade back into elementary schools (though I think this would be hard on my own child who is thriving in 6th grade middle school) c) Turn Central Middle School into a magnet school? When Kansans can choose their school district (per state law, in effect 2024), how do we make Lawrence a popular choice (not one people flee because of 4-day weeks, etc.)? |
| 1/22/2023 14:43:46 | Please make sure the schools that you close are equatable to all students (east /west) in Lawrence. I wish you would have left the names off the schools and assigned them anonymous numbers so the data could be looked at objectively and without the added emotions of it being "their" school and pitting people against each other. But that may be what you intended. If you want to try the 4 day school week that Independence, MO. did, please make sure that you do all of the things they did. There is going to need to be a childcare program available (for free) for parents that can't have children home on Mondays because of jobs. Make sure the Monday work day for teachers doesn't affect their daily plan time, which they need to be able to use the restroom or finish their lunch they didn't get to eat or prep for their classes. If you are going to do any thing or implement anything new please please please do it with administrations full commitment and full funding and not HALF ASS. Please  |
| 1/22/2023 15:05:07 | I know that budget cuts will be detrimental to students in many ways whether they are immediately evident or not. I understand that the biggest cost to the district is personnel, but I also know that in the wake of schools closing, combined grade levels, large classes and loss of routine and relationships, our students mental health is suffering; and right behind that are their academics. Students at the two buildings I serve are fighting to get the attention and support they need and extreme behavior and high student needs are spreading staff members thinner and thinner. I feel like the schools with lower SES status, while maybe not bursting at the seams physically, are overwhelming staff and service providers with their responses to trauma, lack of basic needs being met, and general disadvantaged state compared to other schools with families in a higher income bracket. While considering drastic changes like reduction of staff and combining schools, we need to strongly consider the future of our students that already are starting their educational journey behind students in higher SES areas. If schools are closing - boundaries need to be reworked completely to provide this most equitable educational experience for all of our students.   |
| 1/22/2023 15:06:03 | I would love for the district to look into using LMCMS as a Fine Arts Magnet School 6-12  |
| 1/22/2023 15:24:16 | I am interested in exploring the option of transforming LMCMS into a fine arts academy that (among other things) teaches science through the lens of art  |
| 1/22/2023 17:32:41 | Secondary Learning coaches: Let's look at those positions and see if those in those position are truly fulfilling the duties. Could cuts be made?   |
| 1/22/2023 17:51:28 | I believe the 4-day week would help with the district's retention and recruitment of highly qualified teachers, something that I am concerned with as both a parent of an incoming Kindergartner and a current teacher with the district. Allowing more plan time, collaboration with SPED, TITLE and interventionists will only put our student's first. At this time we are so limited in our ability to do this. I would also encourage the planning committee to truly consider class numbers as a part of school capacity. Our elementary class sizes should not be higher or the same as middle school sizes.   |

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| 1/22/2023 18:33:39 | <p>1) Many classes at BMMS are already at 28 or over. Our rooms barely handle the class sizes we have now. I can't imagine adding more. Also it should be noted that the science rooms were designed to safely handle only 24 students. Larger class sizes make it very difficult and sometimes impossible to safely do labs. With crowded labs all students must be willing to cooperate and be responsible to be safe. Safety comes first. My largest class with 27-28 students has missed doing more than one lab because they could not safely transition to the lab stations. In contrast my smaller classes have had no problems.</p> <p>2) Larger class sizes also will be harder for school like BMMS where needs are higher. We already are not providing support that we legally should according to our SPED student IEPs. In larger classes/less teachers, kids get less individual attention. It is already hard enough to teach without the SPED and SEL support that we should have. Many of our students come to school from trauma backgrounds. They need smaller classes where they can build positive relationships with caring adults. Please come spend a day at BMMS to experience for yourself the struggles we are dealing with.</p>  |
| 1/22/2023 20:18:56 | I would love for us to explore the ideas of magnet schools. Could Central be turned into a fine arts/stem magnet? The cuts can no longer be on the backs of the elementaries. This year has proved that Multigrade and large class sizes is unsustainable. I implore everyone to remember that all schools do not have the same needs- this is why we need to be <u>EQUITABLE</u> , not equal   |
| 1/23/2023 0:22:25  | I do not think that the impacts of school closures were thoroughly quantified in your draft document. While the decisions you make are about the budget realities of the next few years ---closing schools, leaving neighborhoods without nearby schools will impact the city and its development for generations. The plan makes sense and yet it is also leaving the lower income neighborhoods to die, changing the experience of "community" for young families. Summing that up as "emotional costs" is minimizing things. I also do not feel that my questions about equity were address in the document.   |
| 1/23/2023 6:02:31  | If the schools choose to go to a four day a week schedule, we will be leaving the district.   |
| 1/23/2023 7:00:30  | The cuts you made last year have decimated the morale of elementary teachers across the district. If you continue with the madness, you won't have a decent teacher left at the elementary level. You must make major cuts to ESC administration. If upper admin got up off their behinds and actually went into schools and helped, not just walk around like tourists, you might find support for keeping more positions. As it is, the community knows about your hour long lunches, free Florida trips, and utter laziness. The excuses about Federal programming are garbage. I promise you that any building employee works 10 x as hard as anyone at the ESC. They could stand to do more with less for a change.  |
| 1/23/2023 7:53:53  | Class sizes on the West side of town need to be looked at, there are in the upper 20's - low 30's . This makes it hard for the teachers to attend to individual needs and support struggling students. The classes are so full that it is hard to walk around the room. Students who need additional support in and out of the classroom need instructional support from Paras, ISAs if these were cut it would make it difficult for students who struggle be successful. Closing schools would be one way that we could cut our cost, but we could also sell the building at Holcom. Cutting administrators in the head office would also be a big savings.   |
| 1/23/2023 8:11:35  | Do not consider a reduction to a four day school week. It's a non-starter. Don't do it.   |
| 1/23/2023 8:25:09  | I wonder whether the committee/school board/district staff are giving adequate consideration to student needs as they look at cuts and closures. Are you looking to close a school and then basically combine a high number of low SES, low academic, high trauma and high behavior students together? With the recent cuts, students like this are now in rooms with nearly double the students and with teachers trying to cover two grade levels. The students need more support. They need more attention and less chaos. I believe we need to look at cuts and changes that don't affect so much of the student population and direct service in the classrooms. There are positions at the district that make sense on paper, but are frivolous in these economic times. If we consider Maslow before Bloom, wouldn't we think that student-teacher ratios and overburdening teachers is more important than dedicated positions to topics many are capable of at the building level? Or media coverage? And more? We don't need district staff in photo ops. It's perverse. We need boots on the ground. Staff are leaving in droves for better support in other districts. Lawrence needs to show staff they care. Students are not dollars. Staff are not pawns. Let's take a good look at what is essential in this district. Please. |
| 1/23/2023 8:39:20  | Do away with 1-to-1 iPad devices in middle schools and go back to "computer carts." iPads are rarely required at home or outside of school for projects. Teachers who use them regularly (very few, in our experience) can use the carts during the school day  |
| 1/23/2023 9:11:53  | If the school district moves to a 4 day school week, I will likely pull my kids from the district. That creates so many more issues since my work week is not a 4 day work week. And I am so upset by this that I would put them in the Perry district, or I will pay parks and rec to watch them during the day. However, Lawrence Public Schools will not get the money for them on that 5th day.   |
| 1/23/2023 9:12:08  | Close the schools. That is a big bang for our buck. The teachers need to be paid more! We are losing them!  |

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| 1/23/2023 9:16:32  | <p>As hard as it is as a staff and community member, I feel it is in the best interest of the district to close buildings. I also feel that before the board can vote on closing/changes all specific information needs to be provided regarding which schools, new boundary map, etc. It makes the most sense to use our resources wisely and attempt to continue to have smaller class sizes for our elementary and MS students.</p> <p>We do need to increase pay, but taking money from retirement and increasing taxable salary is not supportive of staff. There has to be a way to increase salary without taking away another financial benefit from staff. The district will continue to lose enrollment if we do not make our district a place students and families want to be. Those that can will leave if we do not provide a good educational experience. It is also time to focus on where the students see the most benefits for the investment in our district. This is in their buildings, with the teachers, and support staff in the buildings. It is imperative to decrease spending at the district administration level, both through staffing and through continual updates/changes to ESC. It would be best to sell that building and move the district staff to one of our other owned buildings. Please make sure</p>   |
| 1/23/2023 9:26:03  | <p>The current multigrade classrooms are not sustainable. Our schools need more help and we seem to be getting less. We have a lot of students at Woodlawn in particular that require more one on one attention. We are failing these kids. They are not learning. Our budget should be going to the school buildings not the District office. Our employees at the District level are higher the districts more than twice our size. We are sending kids on to the world and they are going to fail. The class rooms need more help. I think the people making these recommendations should come and spend some serious time in our buildings. Helping in our classrooms. Not just observing. Unless you are in the building working with the kids you really have no idea.</p>  |
| 1/23/2023 10:08:41 | <p>I do not support a 4 day student school week. I don't think there's enough data to support it. We are still trying to recover from Covid, both academically and socially with our students. I don't think it's best for kids to be home an additional day out of the week. I understand that that time will be made up during the week, but I think it's a value for our children to be in school that additional day every week. I believe students will get more academically from that additional day rather than just adding some into a day. From what I heard, the team feels it will help with attendance being off every Monday, but who's to say that we won't have more children starting to miss on Tuesdays? In addition, it was stated at the listening session that when you consider all of the days students already have off and move them to Mondays, as well as the early release Wednesday times, it really isn't that much more time. After doing the math, I find that's it's still roughly an additional 17 days. That is a lot! In addition, we still haven't seen a calendar of how long students would be in school for a normal day, start and end time, as well as when the school calendar would begin and end. To me, this is more about recruiting and keeping teachers. This feels like what is best for teachers and adults, rather than what's best for kids. Shouldn't this be about the kids? We've already made a lot of decisions that affect them; and we know we have to make many more that affect them. Also, have we considered what could happen to our enrollment if we follow through with us? Families who have the means may consider moving over to a private school or leaving the district because of this decision. When we're already concerned about our enrollment, this is another thing to consider.</p> <p>We understand that this is a challenging time and cuts have to be made. Closing schools, while it doesn't seem fun, seems necessary, and an area where we can definitely reduce spending while still meeting student needs.</p> |
| 1/23/2023 10:23:53 | <p>I strongly oppose moving to a 4-day school week, unless instructional/classroom hours can be increased. Students are already behind after covid and decreased instruction time would only compound the problem. Families with resources would be able to invest in additional supports like tutoring, or even leaving to attend a private school. A 4-day school week would adversely affect lower income families and families that don't have access to resources. I'm especially concerned that middle and high school students who wouldn't have anything to fill that time. For elementary school students, Boys and Girls Club already cannot meet the demand for after-school care. Given the cure learning performance deficits and the burden placed on lower resources families, a 4-day school week would be unacceptable. If the school district moves to that, we will enroll our children in private school.</p>   |
| 1/23/2023 10:38:09 | <p>We need to know sooner than later what is going on so we can make decisions for ourselves and our families as to what we are going to do next year. I say this from a teacher perspective about switching districts and starting to apply other places. This can't be a never ending we have more planning, more people coming in, etc. We need concrete answers and timelines.</p>  |
| 1/23/2023 10:46:35 | <p>I hope that if the various Committee's are pounding the beat of "improving teacher pay" that there will be some actual teeth behind that comment. Last year, when hearing the same cries for pay, I recall teachers being greeted with...an \$800 raise. Which is about \$50 a month, take home. Which is an abusively low raise. If you want to manipulate public opinion to favor teachers (and support staff) in these negotiations, then please raise teacher pay to levels commensurate with surrounding districts. Additionally, substitute pay should also be increased to match surrounding areas too. Eliminate redundant and ineffective district admin staff. Close and sell the main USD497 building at McDonald Dr. Close Liberty Central and move all district staff to this building and make this the new admin home. Stop buying new programs that only irritate and enrage teachers. Focus on quality products, not the newest trick of the trade. Do not increase class sizes. Holy sh*t, it's bad in classes right now. 30 plus kids per room with one teacher is an embarrassing ratio. The disruptive kids are the only ones who get the attention in that scenario. It's awful.</p>   |

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| 1/23/2023 11:16:00 | I am concerned that special education services are not mentioned or addressed in the future plan. As the parent of a high needs elementary student with an IEP, I can attest that the district has failed to meet its minimum legal obligations to my child (violated her IEP) on multiple occasions in the past 2 years. For example, the district was not meeting the IEP minutes on some services due to staffing shortages (not enough paras, no OT, etc.). The district has also failed on multiple instances to provide safe and reliable transportation as detailed in my child's IEP. This is illegal and is a problem that needs fixing immediately. The district is lucky I haven't sued yet, and I still may sue in the future because the repeated IEP violations are not OK. This year the SLP working with my child is trying to reduce her services despite her needs not being reduced, and it is very clear to me as a parent that this is happening because the district is short on resources and trying to deny services to children who need them. Children who's parents don't have the resources or energy to fight their IEP teams recommendations to pull necessary services are suffering. In summary: I want to see special education services, including educational therapies and fully staffed para positions, named as a specific priority. I also want to see an explicit acknowledgement that all IEPs must be met at all times, and to do less is illegal. Finally a formal apology to all special educations students who did not have full IEP services at any time would be nice but unlikely to happen (because it admits liability, but still).   |
| 1/23/2023 11:19:12 | I would like more information regarding what activities and sports you are considering cutting. Again, these directly impact students and the experience they have at school. For many students, this is the reason they are motivated to come to school and keep their grades up, and it also helps with graduation rates. It doesn't appear to have that big of a cost savings by making these reductions. Shouldn't we try to keep these experience for the students? We can change the facilities they are in by repurposing schools, make larger class sizes, while still keeping things that keep them interested and engaged in school.   |
| 1/23/2023 11:19:47 | If, we as a school community at large are tasked with, as Dr. Lewis put it, fixing what budget problems started to happen years ago and also plan forward for those students and families to come after us, then we must be progressive in our thinking. Not to "band-aid" it for it to only fall apart in 5 years. The idea of moving towards less school days, less plan time and less administrators, less electives is not the solution. We must look towards allocating students and staff in the facilities that can grow along with the times. I do like the idea of the possibility for closing schools but it might make more sense to make grade centers so that resources can be used in the best way possible for staff and families and without the detriment of causing neighborhoods to decline without their neighborhood school. Or if we are to close schools which should definitely be on the table, then build upon the schools we currently have and make them bigger in size and footprint. Look at economies of size. Instead of gifted teachers being shared among schools, only able to allocate time in little chunks and the rest of the time driving around Lawrence, have a bigger school to consolidate those services. Not just gifted but those with 504s. Make electives selective. For example offer some electives at Free State and others at LHS that way you won't have a top heavy program at one and a dwindling one at the other. Have a bus to take students to attend that specific elective. Create that value in slightly different programming then you won't need to employ two educators for the same thing when you could find a better use for a different instructor elsewhere in a different elective. Currently, there seems to be a theme of Eastsiders vs Westsiders, where that narrative came from, I'm not sure. Eastsiders say they don't want large class sizes but they have yet to recognize Westsider students and families...large class sizes are all we've ever known. "We" I speak for myself being a Westsider. There's nothing that has been done about Quail Run or Langston Hughes' high capacity classes. We'd like smaller class sizes too. So how do we fix that? Make more of an even spread with the use of grade centers, redraw of boundaries perhaps and the re-installation of district-wide bussing. Now I know and have heard there is a bus driver shortage well, if there is "no use" for buses because we rely on parents and guardians to do the driving then there is no demand for bus drivers. Bring back demand and the drivers will come. That all said, if a smaller class size is high on a parent's priority list, do you think parents would mind their child/children not going to their "neighborhood" school? You might be surprised. Be progressive, we live in Kansas, we have so much sunlight to harness! Implement solar so that we can save money on running facilities and use those savings for a different line item. It has been projected that enrollment will decline and educators are leaving the profession at an alarming rate. Where is the survey asking why families are leaving? Find those reasons and there is the point from which to jump and make change. I speak for myself and many of my friends who are like-minded. We do not want our children at present to be guinea pigs to this situation that has been put upon us, we are willing and able to be flexible in the learning, growing and fixing of the budget situation but let's be clear we are not asleep. There is growing suspicion that these public input meetings were just a dog and pony show. I really hope that's not the case. Having this uncertainty about the district may be the reason why there is and will be a decline of enrollment. |
| 1/23/2023 11:31:51 | Where does the 9 million dollar figure come from? Is it driven by the teachers union? Has the district surveyed the teachers and school staff to get a comprehensive idea of what makes a competitive job? Is it really all based on income? Or do they have strong opinions on other factors like class size, multi grade classes, 4 or 5 day schools week?   |
| 1/23/2023 11:38:47 | What is the new purpose for the closed school buildings? How many underutilized buildings does the district currently operate that are not serving as schools any more? Kennedy, East Heights, Centennial, Wakarusa. Wouldn't the sale of buildings and property contribute to the capitol outlay fund, where the money could then be used to invest in developing sustainable practices to meet the ever increasing utility needs? Why does the district so firmly commit to owning, maintaining, and insuring former school buildings? How does that benefit our students and district?  |
| 1/23/2023 11:40:32 | Has the district looked into the Collage Career Center building and wither those classes could happen more equitably at one or both of the high schools?   |
| 1/23/2023 11:43:55 | Does closing Title-1 schools provide those students better academic outcomes, social emotional outcomes?<br>What criteria will the district use when determining which schools to close?   |

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| 1/23/2023 11:44:49 | What is the plan to transition kids from one closed school to their new school? When will parents find out about their kids new school?   |
| 1/23/2023 11:49:00 | It isn't equitable to ask students from low income families to have their children walk across the bridge between north Lawrence and Lawrence to go to school. That bridge is dangerous. Then add in daylight/lack there of on winter mornings, ice, rain, wind, the gaps between the railings, the access to the river, homeless people, and speeding cars. It is completely unreasonable to require Woodlawn students to cross that bridge in order to get to school. It isn't safe.  |
| 1/23/2023 11:51:22 | With the knowledge that my child's elementary school might be closed and a four day class week, I'm actively seeking private school alternatives for her as a working parent. The consensus among most of the parents I interact with is extreme concern about child care with the new schedule. If funding is based on enrollment, adopting these changes will have an impact and further reduce funding. In addition, every parent I've interacted with strongly favors reducing administrative staff.  |
| 1/23/2023 12:12:19 | I would like the committee to please keep in mind the students who get on the bus at 6:30am and school starts at 8:00am. There are closer schools to these students that would save money on buses and cut down the time the students are riding the bus.   |
| 1/23/2023 12:56:34 | 1) Teachers need to be surveyed about what will keep them in the district. They may agree to lower the percentage of salary raises in exchange for better working conditions (smaller class sizes, more plan time). Better working/learning environments benefit both staff and students. 2) Consult with districts like Auburn Washburn in Topeka for easy ways to save money. <a href="https://usd437.net/energy-guidelines">https://usd437.net/energy-guidelines</a> . The Lawrence district does not make much of an effort to save money in ways we can control. Auburn Washburn has saved a lot of money through energy reduction. Ex. Hot water is turned off at 3:00 every day, hallway lights are dimmed, thermostats regulated and turned down after school and on weekends, energy shutdowns over Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring Break (unplug devices/appliances in classrooms). 3) Positions at ESC need to be evaluated for whether they are actually needed. This district has more learning coaches and other "fluff" positions than any district where I've taught. Salaries of district admin are also inflated. This seems very corporate and is difficult for teachers with "boots on the ground" to understand. 4) Close Central, sell the ESC building, and move district administration to Central.                                       |
| 1/23/2023 13:14:52 | Keep it objective. Leave emotions out of it. We have to solve hard issues and can't be emotional. The parents that are upset about neighborhood schools are only thinking short-term. They are looking at the time that their students are attending that school. Stop being so intimidated by yelling parents. 4 day week! It is an opportunity for the schools to actually create an income by offering a budget-friendly daycare program on Fridays that can be run by teachers, classified employees, and can employ high school students. 4 day weeks will attract talented teachers! Do not reduce salaries- teachers will use that extra day to grade and work, but they can do it from home, run errands, practice self-care, take care of appointments, etc.. You will see a reduction in missed days by employees! Consolidate and close unused buildings. Don't dismiss the new ideas introduced like a K-8 building. Do NOT cut positions that work with students. Do NOT cut building administration at the high school level- the ratio of students to administrators is awful the way it is! High school classrooms are being underestimated as far as capacity right now. Core classes are at 30-32 right now. The problem is physically fitting more than 32 into our rooms. Not sure how to do that!  |
| 1/23/2023 13:34:10 | Although it is painful, Lawrence might be in a place where it needs to close elementary schools. Middle school closures seem less easy to navigate, but please opt for school closures before considering a 4 day school week for students. I worry so much about what less time in the classroom will do to students, especially our most vulnerable. I would much rather see schools close than have to resort to this.   |
| 1/23/2023 15:19:29 | As population continues to increase in the south side of town, this district continues to threaten the schools on the south side of town. It doesn't seem to make much sense. My family will leave the district if Broken Arrow is closed and Billy Mills is expanded.  |
| 1/23/2023 15:23:03 | While I understand vast budget concerns, I would like to advocate for smaller class sizes and a larger teacher to student ratio for elementary aged classrooms. Recently my daughter's school was able to successfully (so far) mitigate behavioral issues in their 2nd grade by splitting the two classrooms, each with 22+ students, into three classrooms with less than 15 students per class. Both teachers and students were feeling the stress of the larger class sizes because of the challenging make up of the students in that year. This solution has proved effective in ensuring children are able to receive the support they need to learn. I am thankful to her school's leadership for advocating for both students and teachers. I find the 4-day school week intriguing but so not think it would be successful at the elementary level. I assume the four school days will be longer if this proposal was implemented and asking grade school-aged children to focus for even longer is not realistic. I believe there is a max children of that age can absorb before needing time to process and recharge. I sincerely hope USD 497 and the school board is able to discover a solution to their budget crisis in a way that benefits ALL children and families in the district while most effectively working towards a balanced budget. |
| 1/23/2023 15:37:55 | I am very concerned about the increased staffing ratios. Of all the proposed budget reductions, this is the one I would like to see eliminated or significantly reduced, especially in the middle schools as this is such an important and sometimes difficult transition time for children. I hate to see schools closed, but if this is necessary based on budget needs and there is capacity at other schools, then it should be done.   |

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| 1/23/2023 16:41:41 | I think this entire process is starting from the wrong viewpoint. Instead of "We have to cut costs no matter what", It should be "We have to provide a minimum quality education no matter what". Right now my son is in 3rd grade at Sunset Hill and both 3rd grades have 32 kids. 4th and 5th are combined. No matter what the temporary or permanent budget solution, their first must be 'non-negotiables'. Basic requirements that cannot be compromised. 1) No excessively large class sizes. 2) No mixed grades. It seems to me that the financial problems with Lawrence school district come from having too many small schools, and not enough big schools. This is the difference between Lawrence and Johnson county. I am NOT in favor of creating school 'deserts'. What we need is to close 'some' small schools but not all in a complete geographic area. We need less schools, bigger schools, and geo-spaced schools. This is the only path to long term financial stability. Education Quality has to be not only part of this conversation, but the bedrock. Otherwise the entire point of public education is being missed.   |
| 1/23/2023 17:39:46 | I think that moving high school students is not okay. I have an 8th grader, strong student and works hard. I have been observing him and he does not know how to keyboard, or use a mouse. He has been hunting and pecking on his ipad for 4 years now. He has had not formal typing classes. he simply pecks at the letters on his touch screen. We do not have a home computer. Even if they aren't Apple, a smaller sized laptop would be better for student-learning so that they can learn keyboarding skills. This is essential for typing papers more than a paragraph. I am purchasing him a laptop at home for fear of the upcoming cuts, but this is a serious equity issue for those families who are not able to do this. They will graduate this district with never having exposure to a computer at all. That, is embarrassing and preventable.  |
| 1/23/2023 18:01:04 | Like a lot of other parents, I find it extremely concerning not only that the district budget problems have been allowed to snowball for the last decade, but also that none of the administration's initial proposed reduction categories that were presented to the committee included staff or salary reductions for district administrators. If drastic cuts are needed, administration staff should absolutely not be exempt from that. It is ludicrous to propose that the highest paid staff who have the least amount of contact with students should be the only ones excluded from these cuts. If district administration ends up with no or minimal budget cuts while parents, students, teachers and building staff are forced to endure 4-day school weeks, reduced planning times, reduced programs and activities, building closures, etc, I can guarantee that the district will continue to hemorrhage both students and money.  |
| 1/23/2023 18:41:28 | I am a student at Lawrence High School and my dream career is to be a software engineer. Both of my electives I am enrolled in require a use of a computer to do the work in the class. My suggestion for something you could do instead is give macbooks to people whose classes require it and ipads to people whose class doesn't. Say someone takes their core classes and maybe a wood working class and a culinary class, there would be no need for a macbook, they can get an ipad. Say someone has a fine art class where they have to use photoshop or an adobe editing software, they get a macbook. I think this could reduce the money spent while also keeping peoples needs met as well as people like me being able to follow their dreams.   |
| 1/23/2023 18:57:28 | As a member and student of Lawrence High School's video program, Room 308 productions and journalism publication, The Budget, I can say in all certainty that if the motion is passed to swap from computers to iPads, that these programs will be devastated. Students will no longer be able to create and work freely with the hinderance of limited IPads. The growing programs will also be stifled by this change and start a regression leading to many students not following or being introduced to these unique career paths. Just as Room 308 is truly cementing itself as a power house in video and The Budget is continuing its many years of excellence, the district will ruin them and become the enemy of the students. I again beg the district to please think about what passing this motion could do to students like me and all the fine arts programs in Usd 497. Sincerely, H  |
| 1/23/2023 19:35:12 | I related this at the Public Input session, but I want to reiterate my opposition to moving to a 4 day school week. I think it would be disruptive to the educational process and make our schools less effective   |
| 1/23/2023 19:42:25 | I appreciate the care with which the FPC has presented our options to the public. While closing/consolidating elementary and middle schools is not an easy choice, I believe it makes the most sense both in terms of cost savings (beyond those predicted in the model) and equity across the district. I am deeply concerned about the proposal to move middle and high schools to four days a week, as I think it will hurt the most vulnerable students, including those who depend on school not only for education but also for social-emotional support, food, and physical safety. I also understand that a 4-day schedule will hurt our students' retention of subject matter and consistent development of skills. Finally, I foresee such a move in schedule leading to further declines in enrollment as the parents with resources will move their kids to private options. I have spoken to the board before about class size in my child's elementary school and the loss of Latin at the high schools. On both of those occasions, I heard that the financial troubles of the district made those things unavoidable and I accepted it. I long for a time when the district will be on better footing so that we can build on strengths rather than decide which cuts will hurt the least. Now is the time to do what should have been done almost a decade ago and consolidate/close schools while protecting instructional days and teacher-student ratios. |
| 1/23/2023 19:43:41 | I've not been impressed with the proposals coming from the task force, board or administration. The only "radical" ideas that come out seem to affect parents and community but not the district's upper admins. The district is top heavy, thus the need to close the smaller schools. These closures are unfortunate and not very forward thinking. Pinckney serves a diverse neighborhood that relies on the accessibility and attention each student receives. Consolidating schools and enlarging classrooms will certainly reinforce divisions among underserved communities and those more fortunate. The 4 day week proposal will undermine families that rely on a routine week with their kids. Although a good program, BGC is not the same as a day at school. Such a waste of a well-done renovation to the Pinckney School too - don't close this historic place in the community.  |
| 1/23/2023 21:11:32 | I am not in favor of a 4 day school week. Stop spending so much money on administrators. They add no value to the students' education.  |

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| 1/23/2023 22:45:11 | Concern about the 4 day school week and how one less day of school could negatively affect my children's education.  |
| 1/24/2023 6:41:44  | yes  |
| 1/24/2023 8:16:20  | Retain staff while keeping class sizes as small as possible.   |
| 1/24/2023 8:25:18  | I do not envy the folks that need to make these decisions. There are no easy answers. I really think that we cannot make these class sizes any bigger. If we're going to "raise" the sizes at middle school to 30, then I worry the actual sizes will be 33-35, because many of the classes are already at 30 or even higher. Same thing in some of the elementary classes. It's too many kids for one teacher to effectively teach. I also really worry about our most at risk kids if we go to a 4 day school week. While I think it would be fine for some, those most at risk due to environmental and economic stressors. These two items directly impact our kids the most. Middle school teachers need to team in order to effectively meet student needs. When done correctly, research shows it increases student achievement, parent involvement, and job satisfaction; which are all district and school goals. Middle school is a unique time in children's development and their social, emotional, and behavioral needs are very different than students at other levels. Common team plan time is essential to meet these needs.  |
| 1/24/2023 10:20:28 | Close as many schools as necessary to fully staff and support the students. Keeping schools open doesn't mean it is the best option for students because of convenience. Certified and classified staff need a significant pay raise. Admin and ESC workers that don't interact with children daily should be last on the list of raises, prioritize your frontline workers. Middle school teachers teaching 6 of 7 classes is very reasonable. Elementary Specials teachers teach 7 daily. Too many kids in one classroom does not help them learn at all.  |
| 1/24/2023 10:49:59 | Sped teachers NEED the current plan we have -more than MOST Gen Ed teachers. We do meet with our grade level teams, we use plan time to collect data and observe students in class, we need to make individual lessons for each IEP kid, (not one lesson per kid but multiple lessons per kid with in a class period usually) we also help with Gen Ed kids when we can, (also requires time, thinking and data/observation). I am in my 3rd year as a SPED teacher, and I am getting familiar with all these instruction based strategies, as well as school curriculum Maybe their could be a reduction of 30 minutes in a grade level meeting, or only hold these bi-monthly. Please do not minimize SPED plan time!! We already use more than most of our plan time to collect data on several students. (Sped team meetings are before/after school.) Also, I am a parent of a 11 yr old and I teach a middle school. The other parents I have talked with feel their kids (middle and elementary) should use the office to make or receive parent calls. I know the teachers report kids individually for phone use, but too many go unnoticed or unreported due to the class time required for removal by office. Please PROHIBIT cell phones in middle and elementary schools. Cell phones have been scientifically shown to have caused an increase in myopia (near sighted), poor physical development (posture sitting/standing), decrease in melatonin relating to obesity, sleeplessness, and diabetes, |
| 1/24/2023 11:51:40 | I recommend we close schools to meet our budget deficit  |
| 1/24/2023 14:22:58 | Of all the options presented, the 4 day school week is the most disruptive of them. I am apposed to closing any schools, but if it's between these two options I would select consolidating schools over a 4 day school week. This creates a massive childcare shortage for younger students with working parents, our family included. I'm concerned about the younger students being home alone and not having access to school resources like food and shelter. I'm very concerned about middle school age students having a free day unattended especially in areas of town where we have the most behavior and drug issues among students. I am also concerned this sets students up for the expectation that college and their future careers will only be based on a 4 day work week and the transition will be difficult.  |
| 1/24/2023 15:52:49 | The 4 day school week is an item that should NOT be considered. This will prove detrimental to the students' learning process, the parents'/guardians' financial outlook and employment opportunities, and the economic well-being of the City of Lawrence. Why would any potential employer want to commit to Lawrence knowing that employees will not be able to work a 5-day schedule, and why would a potential employee want to commit to Lawrence knowing that they will need to arrange for child care one day a week, either by taking time off work or paying for outside care? This item will undoubtedly lead to a furthered reduction in student population. Reducing district administration is an item that should be considered. If student population is indeed reducing without any signs of improving or increasing over the short term, then the district administration staff should be reduced at the same rate as the student population.  |



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| 1/24/2023 17:18:48 | <p>(1) Get a second opinion on enrollment projections; it is foolish to rely on the RSP projection for future enrollment. They have been wrong in the past, and they are recklessly ignoring the impact of the Panasonic plant coming to the western edge of Johnson County (4 miles from Douglas County); paraphrasing Rob Schwartz from Jan. 17: "we don't know where the suppliers will go or where the families will live, so we're just assuming no impact and USD 497 enrollment will continue to drop." Eight thousand jobs (at least 4000 of which will be 12 miles from Lawrence) means more kids WILL come to the district. Please talk to someone at the Kansas Department of Commerce - this is the largest economic development project in the state's history and the population increases will be start to be seen in the next year as suppliers get set up. I don't want to see us close a school now and then have to pay millions to build a new school in 5 years. (1a) Assume 20-30 additional students will leave the district for every school that closes. (2) Closing a school WILL increase inequity. The district should SERIOUSLY consider providing transportation for all elementary students who are more than 1 mile from their school. (3) If, after looking at all of the data from KS Dept of Commerce or another knowledgeable source, you are still convinced that a school or schools need to be closed, please follow the do's and don'ts from the Futures Planning Committee Meeting #4 (Nov. 22, 2022) presentation, slides 3 and 4: Be transparent; communicate (proactively); involve families; plan school closures 1-2 years in advance. (4) This process has not felt authentic. District administration and RSP have made it feel like they are going through the motions to pretend to engage with parents and the community, but there has been nothing to make me feel like anyone valued my input. (5) Education is an investment, and the more we put in, the more we'll get out. If we need to be creative to bring in additional funds - from grants, community members, parents - let's consider that (in a collaborative way, not just creating another district admin position to do it). USD 497 administration seems to silo itself off from the rest of the community, oblivious to the caring community members who would love the opportunity to help make this district better. (The opportunities presented through various committees have been squandering well-meaning community members' energy through the district's patented small groups-complete-short-answer-worksheets to avoid allowing meaningful conversation about challenges and opportunities.) Also, can the Lawrence Schools Foundation raise money for additional investments and supports? I am not aware of them funding anything except scholarships for HS graduates, but I know other districts' foundations fund social workers and similar positions with the money they raise.</p>  |
| 1/24/2023 17:34:13 | <p><a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/13hFFSd7JHaDpD20ishs_7RovzlhBA474/view?usp=share_link">https://drive.google.com/file/d/13hFFSd7JHaDpD20ishs_7RovzlhBA474/view?usp=share_link</a> Please follow this link to the document submitted to the Futures Planning Committee and Lawrence Board of Education.<br/> <a href="#">Thank you for your time and attention.</a></p>  |
| 1/24/2023 18:30:06 | <p>I do agree some schools need to close to maximize the buildings, staffing, facilities, busing etc. I understand how the 4 day week would help with the budget and teachers, however I worry a 4 day week wouldn't support the students and working families. What about families whose children only get meals at school, it's their safe space or families who don't have support to help with child care. Even families that have that support but two working parents would struggle for options for their children. BGC is staffed with college students and already short staffed, how could they help with all day options? I just don't see that options as any benefit.<br/>     Looking long term is vitally important so this doesn't keep happening in such a great town.</p>  |
| 1/24/2023 19:10:25 | <p>I am a supporter, advocate, and product of public schools. All five of my children have attended or are attending Lawrence Public Schools. I'm a professional strategic communicator and understand the challenges associated with building support for a very complicated issue or unpopular plan. I have been incredibly disappointed and disheartened by the tone of communication and engagement from the district, as well as the clarity of the information provided to parents. At no point in the last year or this year has the administration attempted to proactively demonstrate shared sacrifice. Not only that, the lack of transparency and the lack of effort to make the parent input experience as easy as possible is shocking. That breeds distrust. Based on the very limited information and data posted by the administration, I recognize the need for tough decisions and cuts. I do not believe we can do nothing - teachers need a significant pay increase to maintain experienced and qualified staff. Based on the graphs at the top of the proposal, it appears that the administrative portion of the budget has grown compared to last year. This is counter to my understanding that administrative positions and their portion of the budget was to be reduced. Administration positions should be the first place to cut. The school board must set this goal more directly. The district should also consider conducting 360 degree evaluations of administrators that takes input from the people above, below and lateral to these positions. There needs to be accountability and transparency about the value these staff members create or do not create. I do not support moving to a 4-day school week. This would be a significant hardship for many families, specifically families who cannot work virtually or afford additional childcare. I support exploring school closures. However, data needs to be collected anonymously to eliminate bias and increase transparency. AND we should NOT build any new facilities. I do not support increasing the number of students in a classroom (staffing ratios). This harms the students that are already struggling and exacerbates inequity. I absolutely support exploring solar power opportunities. However, the board should set a clear goal of gathering the budget and timeline to add solar as soon as possible. They should also task the Lawrence School Foundation or another nonprofit organization (i.e., Douglas Community Foundation) to begin assessing the possibility of a private fundraising campaign to pay for it. The board and administration HAS TO GET CREATIVE. There is no innovation in the efficiencies that were proposed. It is the same cuts that were proposed last year, except maybe solar. We need to think about how we can partner with private businesses to do more for less? How can we leverage KU? How can enhance the teaching experience here in addition to paying them a competitive salary? Is there waste we are missing? What ideas do teachers have about efficiencies (i.e., survey them anonymously). Demand more. Thank you.</p> |

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| 1/24/2023 19:43:20 | I would like the committee to take into account the closing of one of the middle schools. Right now, gun violence is at the forefront of many parent's conversations and is every parent's worst nightmare. The middle schoolers at District 497 do not use their lockers. They carry their backpacks everywhere with them. Adding more students into a school would make the use of a locker even more difficult. How could a student bring a gun to school? In their backpack. Are there metal detectors at ANY of the schools in USD 497 district? The answer is no.   |
| 1/24/2023 19:49:27 | An equitable discussion of which specific schools are in consideration for closure, and how realignment will affect families should be had with the public as soon as possible. Preferably on or before 02/27/2023.   |
| 1/24/2023 19:54:00 | Our district is top heavy. We don't have too many principals but we do have too many people with too high a salaries working at the ESDC. Compare our district with other districts and this is plain to see. District admin. obviously will not share this with school board.  |
| 1/24/2023 19:55:00 | Please make cuts to ESC, far from our children.   |
| 1/24/2023 20:52:04 | Competitive wages will help retain effective teachers.  |
| 1/24/2023 21:30:49 | As a parent, I am struggling to comprehend how we are paying the maximum millage in taxes for school and exorbitant student fees, yet we are in this financial predicament. This District is NOT inclusive to all families, which is why many are choosing alternative options. Those who are concerned with the absolute lack of any kind of functioning discipline policy, no dress code, no attendance policy, and complete lack of accountability for students and parents, feel that they have no choice but to seek educational opportunities elsewhere. Families, students and staff will continue to leave. As a teacher in this District, I know this is not just conjecture. I see it every day. I watch Board meetings and see ridiculous political posturing from both the Board members and the District. I turned down 4 other positions last summer to stay here because I truly love the students, but at this point I feel that I am in a toxic relationship that I have stayed in too long for the children. Now is the time of year when other districts begin the hiring process. There is a teacher shortage. Apparently just not in Lawrence, Kansas. |
| 1/24/2023 21:50:15 | Large class sizes negatively effect the quality of the education my kids receive. No way around the negative impact. At my son's school, the 3rd graders have class sizes of 33 kids. This is an awful burden on both the teachers and kids. In addition, the 4 day school-week proposal offers a crunch for class time and will create scheduling difficulties for working parents. These proposals will weigh on 497s already poor performance relative to its neighboring districts. It's an embarrassing paradox that expensive, enlightened Lawrence, is getting a rep for having the shoddiest educational offerings in the area. Please Look elsewhere for money! Close those schools in north and east Lawrence that were on the chopping block last year. Also -- please trim the outsize Admin budget. We have more Admin positions than neighboring districts. It's a shame to learn of the large salaries and fat raises these people receive. "We have to keep good talent" they say -- while they've been doing a TERRIBLE job of managing funding. Priority number ONE should be the KIDS. Start there and begin cutting elsewhere.                          |

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| 1/24/2023 21:56:40 | <p>Thank you so much for the opportunity to submit feedback in this way. I attended the meeting at LHS last week. Also, thank you for serving on the Futures Planning Committee. I am devastated we are in this situation. None of these options (in addition to the IPAD change this week,) are good ones for students or staff. I grew up in a neighborhood school that was closed when I was in 2nd grade. It was hard, and it definitely impacted us, but the change was short term and affected just our school. I understand why the community rallied to keep them open, but now, because we did not make the hard decision both times it was proposed, we are facing negative impacts on every student. Per a long time admin, "We saved buildings not schools...as a result, we decimated our schools." In addition, when deciding to partner with Apple, the long term expense and risks should have been weighed more accurately. So, now, we are taking away technology and moving backwards to save much needed expenses. In addition, we need to look at why enrollment is decreasing and why it is projected to decrease even more. That should be a big picture concern. Thank you for reading this far; I think it is important to look at why we are in this situation to prevent it and fix it for the future. As far as input for budget reductions, I wish we did not have to propose any of these, but I appreciate you asking the community. Please consider only the options that have the lowest impact on students. Increasing staff ratios will have a negative impact on staff as far as workload and mental health, and it will negatively impact students. Too many students creates an environment of distraction. In addition, taking away electives will negatively impact students. This change will affect recruiting teachers as well as students leading to a greater decrease in enrollment. For teachers, I am sure eliminating plan time at the Middle School level will have a negative impact on job satisfaction and retaining/recruiting teachers, but it does seem a fair option given the alternatives. As a negotiated item, I trust they can come to consensus if it is offset with something that benefits teachers. Reducing District Administration at the District Level would be hard as I know each of them have a key role, but I do think it is a fair option in this situation. We seem top heavy compared to similar districts. Blue Valley has reduced their District office numbers at the highest level over the years to help with the budget. I do not think Administration at the building level should be reduced at all. They all seem to be doing multiple jobs already. Reallocating Board Payments seems to make sense also, but I don't have a great understanding of this and the effect it has on staff. As a negotiated item, I trust both sides can come to consensus on what is best for the district without harming staff. Solar Power and renewable energy are wonderful options to consider but not something that can be implemented/evaluated quickly for this budget crises. However, looking at options in the future will be important if it can save money. Repurpose and closing schools is heart breaking for those students and neighborhoods, but I do believe due to the fact closing schools had been proposed at least twice in the past before we hit this budget crisis, it is something that needs to be considered. Again, I wish this had already been addressed. Instead, we put more money into each school and find ourselves in a budget crisis. We need to think big picture and long term and help return USD497 to a strong school district in the state of Kansas. Currently, people are thinking twice about moving to Lawrence, because of the situation in our schools. Lawrence is a special place. Thank you for the work you are doing to help right this financial crisis and help our schools.</p> |
| 1/24/2023 22:01:56 | <p>Yes-- we need to increase salaries for teachers, but let's pause raises for administrators. A flat percentage raise shared by teachers and admin obviously gives the administrators much higher dollar-figure raises. It is poor optics to say the least, to witness hundreds of thousands of extra dollars flowing to admin's raises while they're electing to pack the kids in like sardines. It seems those in administration have not been doing a very good job at running this district. Reward them with raises once we get through this crisis.</p>  |
| 1/24/2023 22:16:59 | <p>I have quite a bit of input. I was not able to fit it in this space, so I have emailed it to the school board members and to Julie Boyle. Thank you!</p>   |
| 1/24/2023 23:34:23 | <p>I want you to know that, as a parent, I consider a 4-day school week to be outrageous and unacceptable and I am angry and upset that it is even on the table for discussion. I believe that our children's education will suffer as a result of reduced hours, as every study that has looked at 4-day weeks has indicated worse outcomes for children by every metric. I believe that you will force people (women in particular) from the workforce as families, already under strain from economic pressure and limited childcare availability, are forced to "figure out how to deal with it" by carrying the load themselves. For the parents who have to work anyway to make ends meet with kids who are old enough to stay home alone? Their kids will be placed on Mondays in the care of Xbox, YouTube, and TikTok. I do not believe that you will actually save the money you propose because your underlying assumptions that the savings will come from reduced transportation and substitute costs. Your next contract for busing will simply be more expensive on a per-day basis as the bus company attempts to compensate for struggles recruiting and retaining a "full-time" staff limited to only 4 work days (capital costs and maintenance expenses will not be reduced), offsetting any temporary savings. You will also save a minimal amount on substitute teaching, as teachers unable to work due to illness of themselves or their family members will not magically always occur on Mondays. If you want to look for a place to save money, perhaps stop buying every child in the district an iPad. Somehow, maybe by miracle, I managed to get through a public school system, get an engineering degree, and go on to complete a Ph.D. at a top 20 university without anyone ever sticking an iPad in my hand. Maybe there's some money to be saved with a blackboard and a few pieces of chalk. In summary, I hate this idea. I am very angry that you're considering it. In exchange for a tremendous upheaval to all of our lives, it will be bad for kids, bad for parents, and it will not achieve the intended effect of saving the district a paltry 0.5% of its annual expenditures. Good day. -M</p>   |
| 1/24/2023 23:45:35 | <p>I suggest that you all grow a spine and learn how to follow through with your decision making. Gymnastics. Closing schools. Sports. You follow the whims of whatever angry parents in the district yell at you.</p>  |
| 1/25/2023 7:35:36  | <p>If LMCMS is the middle school looking at being closed please just make the decision. This debating every year if it will be closed or not is not good for our students or staff. It would be good to have time to do proper transitions for our students. The same would apply if you are repurposing the school, so that we can work and transition our students effectively.</p>   |

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| 1/25/2023 7:40:47 | Do not reduce school staff and teachers. We've lost a significant amount of staff in the last couple of years already and it severely impacts the services and attention and education we are able to provide to students. More than any study or piece of paper can show.   |
| 1/25/2023 8:23:34 | The four day week makes the most sense. The main argument against it is childcare, as in, parents use schools as childcare. I believe all the core learning can happen in four days. I believe the four day week will attract new staff more than raising wages. For teachers, time is more valuable than money.   |
| 1/25/2023 8:26:26 | Turn Pinckney into another public Montessori school. NY has a long waiting list. Could alleviate some overcrowding at other schools when we close schools and move those students to other schools.  |
| 1/25/2023 8:38:11 | It is nearly impossible to provide feedback about a plan without specifics on what the plan is . I agree that school buildings probably need to close, but if you're asking for feedback we need to know what buildings you're talking about and what the plan is for repurposing those buildings. The information that has been provided is very vague. It's hard to know whether this is by design- if there is a plan with specific buildings that hasn't been shared yet. My suspicion is that there is. Gaining public trust is better when there is honesty around these issues.   |
| 1/25/2023 9:08:05 | At the committee's meeting, I noticed data on population distribution and estimated future trends. However, I did not observe any consideration of student needs in addition to student headcount. According to research in the education field, the cost of educating a student with special needs costs two to ten times that of a regular student. I believe the district must consider the costs of our students' needs, not merely numbers, to prepare a fiscally responsible plan. Our district has a rising number of IEPs, mental health needs, and behavioral incidents, in addition to being behind state averages in core areas (math, reading) at some schools. We should consider the extra staffing and resources needed to meet the needs of our students and families. This includes analyzing socioeconomic data, high risk areas, state report card data, and other important demographic considerations. On a related note, the district should also consider the costs of staff turnover. Not only is high staff turnover detrimental for student learning and community, it is also costly for the district. Training new teachers is expensive. Other teachers must fill in the gaps and mentor new teachers, thus the workload increases school-wide. We already have a critical staffing shortage with essential positions unfilled. How do we incentivize teacher retention, especially at the middle school level? Reducing teacher plan time does just the opposite.  |
| 1/25/2023 9:38:15 | I recognize that the committee members are working hard, and that they have a tough assignment. That recognized, something needs to be said--what does the committee want or expect from this feedback? I know that the proposal is currently in draft form, which in theory is the perfect time for feedback. However, the bare bones draft that has been publicly released on the committee's website is so sparse on details that I do not know how to provide any helpful feedback. True, several of the items in the "Proposed Budget Reductions" column of the draft proposal are specific; namely, the increasing staff ratios, eliminating MS plan time, and reallocating 403b payments. (Before moving on, my feedback on the increased staffing ratios and losing MS plan time is that these are terrible ideas. In a world of increased pressure on test results and of losing strong teachers to other districts/out of the profession entirely, it seems extremely backward to be making teachers' jobs and lives worse.) However, there are other categories that are so vague that it's nearly impossible to provide feedback. For example, which district admin position(s) will be reduced? Which elementary schools and which middle school will be closed? What would the boundary realignment look like? (I can say that I passionately believe that school closures should be based on enrollment and building usage, not closing a successful school on the west side of town just for optics.) And how is anyone supposed to have any thoughts to share with the committee, positive or negative, about the 4 day school week when the details provided are so lacking? After all of the budget concerns and struggles from the past 2-3 years, the staff, students, and community members deserve a proposal that is MUCH more concrete; otherwise, honestly, our feedback is invalid because we don't know what we're talking about. I am extremely concerned about the opacity and incompleteness of the proposal and the committee's overall work heading into a BOE vote soon. Providing surveys such as this one and open houses in the high schools doesn't help much if specific details are not shared openly, especially when the stakes are this high. Finally, I will admit that it's possible that I'm putting the cart before the horse--perhaps more details will be shared with staff and community before a BOE vote. However, we, again, are in the dark about this because the Futures Planning site does not provide in its timeline any details about when the draft proposal becomes the actual proposal, when the actual proposal becomes the vote, or when the vote's results become enacted policy. This is all so frustrating and tiring. Please, please, PLEASE provide more specific details about proposals and timelines as soon as possible. |
| 1/25/2023 9:45:53 | PLEASE GET RID OF EARLY RELEASE WEDNESDAYS. THEY ARE UNPRODUCTIVE, STAFF DO NOT RESPECT THE CONTRACT, THE PD AND MEETINGS FEEL FORCED OR LAST MINUTE AND IT IS A HUGE INCONVENIENCE TO GUARDIANS AND FAMILIES. THOSE MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS GO HOME TO EMPTY HOUSES. I'M UNAWARE OF SURROUNDING SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT HAVE EARLY RELEASE AND I HAVE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING GOOD ABOUT IT. WE NEED THE SAVINGS, WE COULD COMPILE SOME OF THOSE MINUTES INTO AN EXTRA DAY OFF HERE OR THERE.   |

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| <p>1/25/2023 10:52:51</p> | <p>Looking at behavior data it is clear what middle school is being considered for closing. If we do close this school we MUST create equity across our middle school. One large middle school with Billy Mills and Central combined leaves a lot of staff and families in an unfair situation. Also, being aware of the new transfer laws. For example, if my student get a transfer to West because I did it first but their best friend doesn't we create a divide in our community. This is bad for morale. But if feeder schools are able to stick together with their friends and families we create more of a community. Every family and every student deserves the best education possible. so I am proposing that the boundary committee look at feeder school boundaries. Hillcrest, Sunset Hill, Woodlawn and Pinckney, Quail Run, Deerfield to WEST Cordley, Langston Hughes, New York, Sunflower to SOUTHWEST Broken Arrow, Prairie Park, Schwegler to BILLY MILLS I am putting more schools in West because if 2 elementary schools close it seems likely that Pinckney, Hillcrest and Woodlawn might be on that list. This way you mix up the socioeconomic levels at each school and reduce class sizes across the board because each feeder school has a different number of students. I hope Lawrence Public Schools stays a place I am proud to be a part of. I hope everyone who is involved in this committee is really reading everything they say they are. Thank you for your time.</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 11:17:04</p> | <p>I am glad to see that technology costs were considered at the past board meeting. I am curious as to what the cost savings would be switching from apple products to google chromebooks, which is what most school districts use. I'm also curious as to what the cost savings would be if we no longer had 1-to-1 devices across the board, particularly at the primary level. I know that the amount of time students are spending on a device is becoming an increasing concern among parents and some teachers. As a teacher and parent, I also know that we need these devices for testing, but am wondering if we could return to class carts to share among grade levels, again primarily at the elementary level. Has this been explored?</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 11:19:21</p> | <p>I kindly suggest reconsidering the removal of the reduction of middle school plan time, if the current five day week remains. Even with two plan periods, as newer teacher with four separate preps, I am often working on unpaid time during early mornings, evenings and weekends in an attempt to keep up with my workload. I utilize my prep time to grade, create engaging lessons, activities and assignments, contact parents, reach out to students who need help. I've covered colleagues' classes so they can attend meetings or attend appointments. While 50 minutes doesn't seem like much time, it is essential to the non-teaching aspects of education.</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 11:33:16</p> | <p>Dear School Board,<br/>                 ຂ້ອຍຊື່ Laurie Matney ແລະຂ້ອຍເຮັດວຽກຢູ່ Hillcrest Elementary ບັນຄຸສອນດົນຕີທີ່ວໄປ. ຂ້ອຍຮູ້ວ່າການຕັດສິນໃຈທີ່ຈະມາເຖິງຈະບໍ່ເປັນເລື່ອງງ່າຍ ແລະຂ້ອຍເຊື່ອວ່າເຈົ້າມີຄວາມສົນໃຈດີທີ່ສຸດຂອງນັກຮຽນ. ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮູ້ວ່າທ່ານຕ້ອງໃຫ້ຂ້າພະເຈົ້າ ກັບອີເມວແລະຈົດໝາຍຈາກຈຳນວນຫຼາຍແລະຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮັບຮູ້ວ່າການຕັດສິນໃຈທີ່ທ່ານກຳລັງເຮັດແມ່ນມີຄວາມຫຍຸ້ງຍາກແລະຂ້າພະເຈົ້າຮູ້ວ່າທ່ານໄດ້ຮັບການຝຶກຈາກນາທີ່ຍິ່ງໃຫຍ່ໃນສິ່ງທີ່ຈະເຮັດໄດ້.</p> <p>Do you need assistance or some help in figuring out what is said above? Me, too! So, do over 150 of our Hillcrest Students and we are set up to do just that. Above reads...My name is Laurie Matney and I work at Hillcrest Elementary as the general music teacher. I know that the upcoming decisions are not going to be easy and I trust you have the students' best interest at heart. I know you must be inundated with emails and letters from many and I acknowledge that the decisions that you are making are difficult and I know you are putting great consideration into what will be done. Thank you.At Hillcrest elementary our motto is 'Where the World Goes to School.' It has been my pleasure to work with the student population we have. What I have learned is that having my ESOL certification and working with other teachers who have their certification that accommodate specifically to this population gives those students a fighting chance for success. All our teachers have been specifically trained in ESOL strategies that are research-based. Our ESL students get to be around other students like themselves who make speak the same language or may just be learning English from all different places in world, being represented. We are also grateful to have some staff members who are represent different groups of our students. We are equipped to have forms filled out in other languages, give parents teacher conferences with a translator, and we have staff knowledgeable of what different cultural preferences are. For example, I know that it is more comfortable for some cultures if I don't reach out and attempt to shake the hand of the opposite gender. These are only a small number of strengths our school provides, and advantages our district has because of our school. Here, at Hillcrest, student needs in relation to their diversity are truly a priority. I realize that the busing situation to get all the students here is costly, but if they become only a minuscule percentage of the population of each of their neighborhood schools, they WILL be left behind. In short, to be treated equitably doesn't mean all are treated equally. It means that all, not some, are given the tools they need to succeed. Please keep Hillcrest a tool for our students. Sincerely, Laurie Matney<br/>                 Lschwegler4@gmail.com</p> |
| <p>1/25/2023 11:44:53</p> | <p>Thank you for the hours you have spent considering budget reductions for the district. I support the recommendations you are making, especially the proposal to close three schools. I think our community needs to understand that "saving our schools" has a bigger meaning than keeping every building open. Saving our schools means that our district is using our available funds in the most efficient way to serve ALL students in the district. Keeping under-utilized buildings open is a cost that we cannot afford. It also benefits only a fraction of the district's students. While I feel for the students and families that will need to adjust to a new building, previous boundary change moves have shown us how quickly students adapt to the change.</p>  |
| <p>1/25/2023 11:47:28</p> | <p>So many middle schoolers ALWAYS bring their phone - but never bring their iPad. Also, here is the TED talk about damage of cell phones<br/> <a href="https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/B1Xt1Yx1">https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/B1Xt1Yx1</a></p>   |

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| 1/25/2023 12:03:45 | <p>"Middle School Plan Time" is listed as a possible cut . . . I wonder if everyone realizes that it is not just teacher plan time that will be cut but also student electives?? The phrasing is misleading. Thanks to everyone who is doing the work and learning all of the ins and outs. Your time is appreciated!</p>   |
| 1/25/2023 12:05:04 | <p>To consolidate the schools and better serve the children needs. Utilizing the resources at hand with supporting the schools and staff even if it means to school closures. It is too costly to keep schools that are not at capacity running when consolidation would save money and place more resources in one building to better serve the children's needs.</p>  |
| 1/25/2023 12:22:01 | <p>Those who work with students, directly make the largest impact on student's outcomes: social, emotional and academic. Having a large administration group, with their various secretaries, tend to assign more tasks to an already overwhelmed instructional staff and put undo strain on the budget. Can we thin the top heavy administration down, please. PS. I am not referring to our building principals who do have relationships with students and support teaching staff.</p>   |
| 1/25/2023 14:10:16 | <p>Ease the requirements of hiring teachers and staff. For example, some people comes from abroad with college degrees and teaching experience. Instead of letting them taking the teaching license exam, the school district could provide them with tracing courses for 6 months or a year. Then through these courses the people can be certified to teach. For staff, it might be much interesting to people to join if the pay is well and the requirements are much simple and easy and also training</p>   |
| 1/25/2023 15:34:06 | <p>Thank you for soliciting community feedback. I have one child in Schwegler and another who will be starting kindergarten soon. We are invested in this public school system and will continue to be part of it and support it. I am asking the committee, district and board to reject a 4 day school week. It will only save 700k—a drop in the bucket of what is needed and will cost families substantially more than that to find childcare. It doesn't save money, it simply offsets the cost to families and caretakers who, like our teachers, are still struggling so much with the new normal we are in. I support saving our schools, however, it seems clear that downtown East Lawrence cannot support 4 elementary schools. This is the fault of our city not supporting even growth especially with families, but instead supporting developers and landlords in that area. Family homes in that area are extremely expensive, while rentals in the area are poorly maintained. I support closing one or two schools in that area. BUT coupled with a clear plan of action to our city telling them that they need to support even growth in all areas of our community. Next, and this is key: you report that equity wraps around this entire process. I have not seen a single in depth equity report. I am a professional who studies historical inequity. I want to see a clear report about what populations will be affected by closing particular schools; by creating larger classrooms; by instituting a 4 day with week, etc. I want it broken down by demographics. We cannot decide what is best to do until we understand WHO is most affected negatively by moves or substantial changes. Who does the committee have that is particularly examining and quantifying specific equity issues?? There are numbers to run with this. Finally, this community is very economically divided. There is no excuse for a community that houses two major universities to have trouble funding it's schools. Taxes need to be higher and they need to be based on income. I think the school board should ask the city to do more in the long term to boost school revenue. I understand that might not be the point of these meetings and this committee. But this is a continuous problem. Our teachers and staff and administration are being asked to do more with less. That is not equitable. And any changes to the current system must be accompanied by sustained and systemic change in the long term ways we are seeking and finding funding.</p> |
| 1/25/2023 15:58:01 | <p>I realize this has not been specifically said but it is obvious which schools would be affected.<br/>As a rural South Lawrence resident, we feel like taking Broken Arrow and converting it to an adjunct to Billy Mills would be a disservice to us and our neighbors. We rely on the schools being next to each other and with the same start/end time. Without that, we would need Boys and Girls Club services which are full in most, if not all locations. Broken Arrow is not under capacity. And, it has room for growth within its boundaries. In a time when district borders will be opened, we need to be keeping stability with our schools. Nearby to us, we have private schools options as well as surrounding districts that are just as close as if we were diverted to Schwegler. My children love Broken Arrow, and the staff there excels at what they do. Please think of more lucrative options to pull students in (Montessori, etc) versus pushing us out.</p>  |
| 1/25/2023 16:31:28 | <p>I know that any decision made will be difficult and bring changes to the lives of all our families, staff, teachers, and administrators. I am writing to speak against the proposal to limit school to 4 days a week. First, the fiscal savings from that change are minuscule in comparison to the real costs that will be incurred by families that will struggle to find childcare for the missing school days. On that note the change to 4 days would disproportionately impact economically disadvantaged students and only exacerbate inequities in our educational system. Second, the cost of maintaining a physical plant is such a great expense that the idea of closing some schools must be revisited. I know that there was a great outpouring of frustration when this was most recently floated, but if the option is to close and consolidate schools or cut instructional days from the week the former is overwhelmingly the better choice. Having reviewed the materials presented by the district, I believe that a solid argument can be made about which schools to close based on actual demographic needs of the city's children. The district should use that hard data to make determinations that can be justified based on where our children are in the city and how many physical campuses are needed to support their education. Parents and families whose local school is closed will still be upset, but if you can justify why specific schools were chosen and how the closures are designed to meet our existing demographic realities I believe that parents and families will be more understanding of the decision. Finally, using that data the discussion of closures should make clear how those closures may impact existing inequities in our district and how district policies will address those impacts in order to ensure greater equity across the district.</p>  |

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| <p>1/25/2023 16:39:23</p> | <p>I attended one of the public input sessions and was deeply disappointed there was not an opportunity for people to provide feedback in a large group setting. The format of having people gather in small groups seems intentional to limit the ability of everyone to hear all the feedback - negative and positive - about the proposed budget cuts. Unfortunately, from what I hear from others this seems to be a trend in USD 497.</p> <p>Regarding the specific issues at hand, I have several follow-up questions and comments: Has the consultant's projections about enrollment in the past been accurate? Without taking into account the Panasonic plant and all of the associated suppliers, how are we to believe the enrollment estimates are accurate? Has the district engaged with the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce to discuss how changes made by the school district will either encourage or discourage families from living in Lawrence? I believe it will be harder to attract economic development in Lawrence if families are faced with shortened school weeks and continuously under resourced schools. To my knowledge, nothing in the proposals ensures that if any of the proposed actions are taken it will result in more resources in our schools. As a parent of a kindergartner, I have been shocked at the lack of resources in the school compared to what the teacher needs to best accomplish her job. What can be done to ensure schools and classrooms have the resources (mostly additional staff, I believe) to meet the needs of students? As someone with the ability to put my children in private school, I now fully understand why so many families in Lawrence choose private school. Without a concerted effort to improve Lawrence schools, more families will choose private schools, which will only perpetuate the enrollment issue. The proposal to go to a four day school week must be tabled, for many reasons. One, this is a completely inequitable solution to any problem. I heard this may only be for middle school and high school, but even with older children who are able to stay home alone, significant equity issues persist. Two, families with the means to do so will leave the district, either moving to neighboring districts or placing their children in private school in Lawrence. This will only exacerbate inequities in education. Community members and parents need a better explanation of why the district is in the financial position it's in. What got us to this point? Given that the Governor has stated repeatedly that schools are fully funded, why is USD 497 seeming to have such greater financial struggles than other districts. Without a clearer explanation, I'm left to assume we're in this position because of gross mismanagement over several years. If this is the case, which I can only assume it must be because I don't see another reason, then leadership change needs to seriously be on the table. The Board must seriously consider seeking new leadership for the district. Overall, the options put on the table by the futures committee seem to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. I would prefer to hear optimistic ideas about how the school district can attract additional funding (grants, or ensuring the district is receiving all the Medicaid reimbursements it can for various services, etc.) with the aim to make USD 497 one of the school districts in the state that families go out of their way to enroll in. I, for one, believe USD 497 can be a premier district in the state that attracts families to Lawrence and keeps families in Lawrence. But, I think this will require a shift in mindset and some more creative thinking than cutting our way out of a problem. Suzanne Wikle</p> |
| <p>1/25/2023 17:07:11</p> | <p>I am a teacher in the district. I feel like a four day week for students is not what is best for students and families. I think having face time with students five days a week is best. I believe that this district must compensate teachers, and if closing buildings will make this more of a possibility, then that needs to happen. I feel like closing Central (high needs population) and putting them all at Billy Mills is not a good idea. Taking plan time away from any group of teachers is not in the best interest of anyone. Elementary still does not have comparable plan time to secondary teachers.</p>  |
| <p>1/25/2023 17:48:34</p> | <p>If this is what is necessary to reach the goals then it needs to be done.</p> <p>I am glad to see that the district is considering way to reduce the budget by reducing technology costs. However, switching Macbooks for Ipads is a stopping short of what should be done to improve the budget. Apple products are notoriously hard to repair and with the district's enormous device repair costs, why is the district not switching to chromebooks? Also, as a former high school teacher in the area, there seemed to be consensus that Ipads are disliked by students and teachers. They often do not support open education resources/websites and the interface is often problematic. How much could the district save by switching to more practical devices? Furthermore, as a parent, I do not want my child to be 1:1 with a device anyway. The detrimental effects to students' mental health by spending that much time on screens is very well documented in the scientific literature and thus should be seriously reconsidered. Is the mental health of our youth worth the added convenience for teachers? It seems strange that the Lawrence district would invest in a Montessori model of education, which deemphasized devices, to attract more students to the district, while maintaining millions of dollars of 1:1 devices in all of its other schools. Also, in my experience teaching, students do not like how much teachers rely on those devices to deliver content in the classroom. What if we just didn't do 1:1 and expanded the number of computer labs to accommodate digital work when it is necessary? Wouldn't the district save a lot of money and improve student wellbeing?</p>  |
| <p>1/25/2023 17:55:42</p> |  |

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| 1/25/2023 18:03:02 | <p>It's clear from the RSP presentation that district has been overbuilt for a long time, likely the result of a poor policy to respond to –not participate in guiding— new residential development. It is not immediately clear that the solution to this is to find efficiencies by closing schools. If the district is seeking to improve efficiencies in the elementary schools, for which the overall population size is predicted to remain essentially level, it seems the first thing to do would be to perform a comprehensive boundary analysis, with an eye towards improving both service and increasing cost-efficiencies. To my understanding, this is something that stake holders have been requesting for years now, and it is long overdue. It is evident even from a cursory examination of the map that –all other things being equal— boundaries are not currently optimal; for instance, with some K-5 students crossing major thoroughfares to reach school. It is possible that the findings of such an analysis would be that students would be both more effectively and more efficiently served with the closure of one or more schools, but that has not been demonstrated in the RSP presentation. All that has been shown is that, with the current boundaries in place, some schools fall below a 75% capacity threshold, while others do not. As to the possibility of closing either elementary or middle schools, I hope the district will remember that all but one of the school closures within the city in recent memory were schools east of Iowa St. School closure is very disruptive for children and almost always inequitable, favoring more affluent families served by newer schools. It is also harmful to the neighborhoods served by the schools that are closed, negatively impacting home values and making it harder to attract new families. If schools are to be closed, the district must make a better effort to spread the burden evenly.</p> |
| 1/25/2023 19:19:23 | <p>I would like to see the district reduce their technology expenditures in order to save staff. Get rid of the Apple contract and that would save the district thousands of dollars. Elementary school children, especially the younger grades do not need 1:1 iPads. They need small class sizes where they can receive the appropriate attention from their teacher. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that children should not be on screens more than 2 hours a day. But they are given time sporadically throughout the day, they earn extra time on iPads at the end of the day and for parties. The number one priority should be small class sizes because that is what evidence has shown to be the most important thing for a healthy classroom, for students and teachers. Getting rid of the 1:1 for all students will save staff, reduce screen time for children and also improve teacher retention if they are able to have smaller class sizes as a result of these savings. Increasing class sizes should be the LAST option and frankly shouldn't be an option at all. Larger class sizes means increased behavior problems which reduces learning and exhausts an already exhausted teaching staff.</p>  |
| 1/25/2023 19:45:40 | <p>Lawrence needs to shift focus towards lowering class size. With all decisions the district needs to consider it's effect on class sizes. Consider cutting the Avid program, Second Step/Character Strong curriculum, gymnastics, etc. I teach in Eudora and we use Chromebooks. The devices work fine, arguably better than an ipad, and at 1/4th the cost. I cannot understand the rational of paying for ipads when all we need is access to the internet. High schoolers on ipads is a terrible decision. It often feels like Lawrence central office/administration think they managers for the Yankees and have unlimited spending. They need to recognize that we are more similar to the Royals and we cannot afford Apple products and special curriculums, and all of the sports. How is it that neighboring Eudora with a much smaller tax base &amp; higher student per capita is not in a continual budget crisis like Lawrence.</p>  |
| 1/25/2023 19:56:16 | <p>Save small neighborhood schools. Do not let schools waste money on things like idismiss.</p>  |



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| <p>1/25/2023 20:02:15</p> | <p>Parents, students, and staff will be negatively affected if USD 497 moves to a 4-day school week (Tues-Fri) that the Futures Planning Committee and board are considering. We must act now, before the Feb 27 school board meeting, to have our voices heard. Across the nation, studies have shown that the 4-day school week has many negative impacts on small town and suburban districts (though it can work well for some rural districts). Among the problems: *LEARNING LOSSES: The loss of only one day a week results in the equivalent of losing SIX WEEKS of education each year, especially in reading and math. That's one quarter of their educational learning lost. *INEQUALITY: Non-white students and lower-income students experience more losses in education than their white or more privileged peers. *FOOD INSECURITY: Students on free or reduced-priced meal plans go hungry on days not in school. *INCREASES IN JUVENILE CRIME: Some studies show increase in neighborhood juvenile crime on days students are not in school. *LOWER WAGES for parents, particularly mothers who stay home to supervise/care for students not in school (this applies especially to parents of younger students or students with disabilities who cannot be left unsupervised). *LESS THAN 1% SAVINGS. Schools currently on 4-day weeks report only 1-2% savings. The USD 497 plan would save less than 1% of the yearly budget. It's not worth upending the entire community for that (and these numbers are only projected, not guaranteed). Locally, we have not been provided with evidence of HOW the 4-day school week will save \$700,000 per year (&lt;1% of the USD 497 budget). Moreover, those considering this policy seem not to have considered: *Transportation costs and projected savings in that area cannot be guaranteed because they are on short-term contracts. We already can't staff enough bus drivers, and if the bus company has to pay drivers more so a 4-day week is a full-time wage, they will renegotiate their contract at the earliest chance to pass that bill back to the district. If you don't think so, see the recent renegotiation on technology that jumped so high we're going to pay 3.2 million for ipads (from where!? Where is this secret "capital outlay budget" with that money but not money for our schools otherwise?). *Teacher salaries cannot (and should not) be touched (and in an ideal world, they should increase). *Staff salaries (hourly employees) should not be touched. If we want to recruit and retain good para-educators, office workers, cafeteria staff, custodians, and other hourly employees, we cannot afford to give them shortened hours (and the potential solution of asking them to work 4 ten-hour days sounds brutally inconsiderate). We will lose good staff in a 4-day school week. *Decreasing enrollments will happen, as parents who can begin moving their students to schools with 5-day school weeks. This will reduce state funding even more. Moving to a 4-day week would increase the inequality in the district, decrease the quality of our students' education, and negatively impact the district financially in ways the committee and consultants do not appear to have considered. Right now, the plan only applies to middle and high schools, but if that starts, it will be even more difficult to prevent the 4-day school week at elementary schools where learning losses will be even greater and more significant. You should strongly consider cutting administrative positions (25 admins for 19 schools seems a LOT). And you'll probably have to close schools - primarily because people refused to close ONE school 8 years ago; let that be the lesson we learn: not to kick the can down the road again and threaten district-wide education for the sake of local elementaries (my kid already gets bussed to a different school than the one nearest me for sped reasons; we survive). Do not wreck teach retirement 403(b) plans; DO invest in solar power. And DO publish the entire district budget - operational and secret "capital outlay." People deserve to have transparency - how are we talking about closing schools yet paying \$3.2 million for technology? I can afford to buy my kids laptops or ipads - you should only give free ones out for need-based students. I do not WANT your ipad. I do want you to buy them for students whose families can't afford them, but I don't want you spending your budget to buy people of my class or the rich folks extra ipads. Thank you for your hard work and for being willing to listen to community input. But please, PLEASE do NOT make decisions that will literally or figurative impoverish the district based on shaky financial numbers. You can't trust the 4-day school week "savings" - you can trust the ones for cutting administrators, closing a school, and not paying exorbitant costs for technology for students who could afford to buy their own. Good luck, and thank you.</p> |
| <p>1/25/2023 20:04:19</p> | <p>There are significant concerns with behavior challenges at the middle schools. How will the larger class sizes, less staff collaboration, and additional students moving from Central impact these students who are transitioning to high school from elementary school (as well as the staff your are asking to manage more than the challenges being seen now)? Have district employees visited the middle schools without the additional cuts you are suggesting to see the current concerns?</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 20:12:23</p> | <p>I don't agree with closing our neighborhood schools as a budget cutting measure. This isn't an equitable solution.</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 20:13:53</p> | <p>Hope that whatever the school board in its infinite wisdom chooses to do, they don't forget to make sure that proper attention (read: funding) goes to kids requiring special education.</p>   |

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| <p>1/25/2023 21:27:57</p> | <p>Thanks to all members of the committee and the school board for giving their time and thought to this pressing and challenging issue. I know there have been hours and hours put into making sense of the various challenges, solutions, and fallout. Thank you for that service to our community. I have a few questions and then I'll add some comments to consider in your deliberations. Specific questions: There's a lot of talk about "repurposing" two elementary schools and a middle school to save a specific amount of money, but what does "repurposing" mean? There are rumors about LMCMS being turned into an elementary school, but what would retrofitting cost? There are rumors about it becoming a Performing Arts or Stem school—great, but how does that save money? If elementary schools are closed, what "purpose" will they be used for? This needs a lot more explanation.- Regarding the 4-day school week, how does that save money? Do teachers get paid less? Is it just bussing and staff costs? (We pay staff so little, that giving them 80% pay/work will only make those empty jobs harder to fill.) Assuming this would trickle down to lower grades, would there be BGC provided out would facilities be closed? - Slide 20 says that "Live births in Douglas County have been decreasing the past five years" but on p. 12 it shows live births going from 1021 to 1060 in 2021. So is this an average, or just a misrepresentation of the data? And national birthrates are showing a pandemic "bump" so why don't we see 2022 data in these summaries? Comments: I understand that the budget crisis is a real problem. It seems to me that drawing long-term conclusions about school population data at this moment, with the last three years being what they've been, is unwise. I urge the schoolboard to focus on changes that can be more easily reverted later if demographics change—class sizes, extracurriculars, etc. Closing schools, redrawing district lines, upending neighborhoods, are more permanent changes. Here are some good reasons to be cautious: - National data shows birthrates going up the last two years (as does the gathered data for Douglas County in 2021).- Rates of families withdrawing students from public schools are likely to change because o i. Families might have homeschooled during the pandemic, or chosen private schools, because of the challenges for in-person learning. Why think they'll continue with that? o ii. The economy is changing, and families home-schooling might need to take on extra work (sending kids back to public school), or families in private school might choose not to keep paying those rates (especially with New York's innovation as an alternative). These are reasons to be conservative in making decisions based on projected trends for a couple more years until those factors even out. Another reason not to close schools right now is the increased emotional and behavioral challenges that the pandemic has produced. We are still in a crisis in this respect, and consolidating students to concentrate classrooms for monetary "efficiency" overlooks important reasons why under-populated classrooms, though costly in dollars, are a huge advantage to our children and teachers. We're struggling with teacher burnout, and money is not the only factor relevant. Managing 17 vs 26 students now is not what it was five years ago, nor is it what it might be in another five years—this is a uniquely challenging time to increase class sizes. It is costly to have students spread out, to be operating "below efficiency" in buildings, but it might also be very important right now. Talk to teachers and principals about this issue, particularly those whose schools would absorb more students. Closing elementary schools is a permanent decision, and the ripple effects for teachers and other students in the district are major. Before deciding to close a school, I think we should have more information about which groups would be most affected. We need to know which school would close and whether that would result in decreasing or increasing inequities in education. Who would be affected negatively or positively in our community? The more I engage in this process, the less transparent everything seems. Here are several points that make the situation less, rather than more, clear, given the information provided:- There's data about KU enrollments... why? what conclusions are being drawn from that? - When we asked someone at the public meeting about the 4-day week as a budget saving proposal, we were told to "just ignore that" and focus on other things. - On slide 23 the color green is used to designate schools with yield rates "Less than 10 from District Average" but then it's highlighting numbers in the teens when the average is 35. I would have thought green would highlight numbers 26-35 by that description. I know others have provided important research about the various costs involved in shifting to a four-day school week. I would just like to reiterate</p> |
| <p>1/25/2023 22:15:26</p> | <p>support low ratio grade schools and neighborhood schools- don't support the 4 day a week classes--too long for students and would worry about decreasing opportunities for meals for students in need. Offering other services at the lower population schools- as the New York Montessori program or early childhood from Kennedy (since unfortunately closed already -except for early childhood). What is status of East Heights -continue to be open for CTRAN and Behavior/Mental Health or can it be consolidated with another school. What about ESC using Central building and selling ESC (prime real estate).</p>   |
| <p>1/25/2023 22:18:16</p> | <p>Cutting to 4 days is a bad idea; don't do it. That will not just cause a 20% drop in costs. If I was a bus driver, lunchroom worker, etc. taking a 20% pay cut, I would look elsewhere. Also, the educational instruction cannot be measured in minutes squeezed in a day. Like the ridiculous Wednesday we have now, squeezing time elsewhere just causes more lost on the days off. Why are our staff wages lower than our peers in Johnson County? Too much administration. We have too many school buildings, which unfortunately, means we need some closures. We need to run this operation like the size we are, not what we think we ought to be. I think we can do with far fewer administration positions and a smaller board/admin building on McDonald Drive. Also seems we spend a lot on the latest fad teaching "plan" which is similar to the latest diet fad. Spend money on the latest thing. Please stop.</p>  |

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| <p>1/25/2023 22:24:44</p> | <p>My name is David Jordan. I live at 1621 New Hampshire Street. I have a kindergartner at Cordley. After attending the futures event earlier this month, I find the current options and public engagement/process to be unacceptable. First, the process' vision is not centered on how to build the best school district but how to develop financials that are centered on cutting the budget to achieve sustainability. Unfortunately, until the goal is to build a better school district and experience for our students, the cuts will perpetuate quicker disenrollment and a scarcity mindset, which will negatively impact the district and the community. At the public meeting's presentation, there was no discussion on how to generate revenue and how to creatively leverage the district and communities' assets to build a better district. Shutting down schools without reducing class sizes and without enhancing services is not a recipe for success. I'm very troubled that much of the premise of these drastic proposals are grounded in projections of a loss of just 300 students. Yes, that's a big loss. However, if the school district were able to offer more robust services, we could compete for scholars who left the district for private and in-home instruction. In coming years, we could compete for students from out of the district. What's most troubling is that there was no analysis of how the Panasonic deal would impact school enrollment. Consultants said the deal would have no impact on enrollment. That is not possible. There will be 8000 jobs created in the region. Our community has desirable amenities and houses KU, which will produce a number of engineering professionals for the mid and high level jobs. There is going to be additional jobs and businesses supporting the plant and initial conversations indicate the project could get bigger. It is shortsighted to dismiss the fact that 8000 jobs would not produce an in-flow into our community and not just replace the loss of 300 students but could result in many more students in the district. However, if we cut and cut and cut, families will not want to locate in Lawrence. It seems counterintuitive that Lawrence and Douglas County are taking the lead in maximizing the impact of the Panasonic deal by hiring a project manager housed at the Chamber while the school district is dismissing the impact of the deal and downplaying the impact of the project in it's projections. I personally spoke with the high-level officials and they share my concerns about the district's consultants dismissing the impact on the school districts. Unfortunately, the impact of the Panasonic deal and the inflow of residents it will create does not fit within the narrative the consultants and district want to share. Beyond my questions about the projections and the unwillingness of the district to entertain the impact of the Panasonic deal and potential ways to grow enrollment and revenue, I am deeply troubled by the lack of true public engagement and public input. The consultant's graphic show public participation centered in the process. However, there were just two options for public engagement in the process. Most disturbing is the fact that the public engagement was not designed to have a robust, public and free exchange of ideas. Instead the public engagement separated folks into groups without the opportunity to engage in a robust way. There was no opportunity for the administration and consultants to truly hear concerns in a public forum. It was a carefully managed process that minimizes dissent and community voice. It's a lot easier to look at google sheets and post-it notes than to actually listen to the concerns of the community. If you're going to act on cutting schools and services, it's irresponsible to rely on curated public engagement process and to not truly listen to the community. As a parent, I'm also deeply concerned that even if we cut the number of schools, we will not see reductions in class size. My son's experience in kindergarten has raised flags as teachers, without paras, have been struggling to manage the large number of kids in their classrooms and, as a result, some significant behavior challenges went unknown until reports to pediatricians and state agencies. This is unacceptable. If we're going to cut schools, we need to reduce class sizes and improve student experience. There also should not be any talk of a 4 day school week. It sends the wrong message to the district and the community that we can't even maintain basic education services. It's embarrassing and should not even be a negotiating technique. We also need to raise teacher salaries but we should not be raising teacher salaries exclusively on the backs of students who lose the experience of community schools and who continue to be in classrooms that are too larger and need more support. We need to start this process over and truly center it on creating the best student experience possible and inform the process with real public engagement versus a sanitized process. We need to look</p> |
| <p>1/25/2023 23:13:52</p> | <p>First I would like to thank the board for taking a thoughtful approach to this issue and for consulting with the community. I had a couple of thoughts I wanted to share. I'm not sure how much it would help the overall picture but I had a few ideas. No one likes increasing fees, but I wonder if they would be more open to it if it meant keeping other things they do like. Maybe increase the cost of activity tickets for middle school and high school by \$5.00. Increase the cost for non-students to attend sporting events by a few dollars. Increase the cost to participate in a sport or have the kids pay for more of their equipment. I would think that this could help particularly for sports like football that require a lot of gear. I understand that not all families can handle the increased costs and you do not want to exclude those families. If the family qualifies for the free/reduced lunch program then they don't pay more. I know gymnastics was on the chopping block last year. I'm assuming the program was cut. What if you had an all Lawrence team (combined Free State and LHS) for the smaller sports and activities. I understand that it could pose some logistical questions with transportation but I would think it would be cheaper to run one program versus two. I looked over the data from the meetings and it does look like closing an elementary on the east side makes financial sense. I totally understand families being completely opposed to the idea. Perhaps framing it differently could help? Make it a joining of school families instead of "sorry we are closing your school." Maybe if it was seen more as a coming together than a tearing apart it would receive a better reception. Maybe. Finally I am not in support of the 4 day school week. My child is tired enough at the end of regular school days now. Focusing until the end of the day is tough currently, it would be so much harder if she was at school later in the day. Not to mention all the scrambling people would have to do for child care, etc. That seems like a better on paper solution than an actionable plan.</p>   |

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| 1/25/2023 23:23:39 | <p>I feel that school closures are inevitable, which is frustrating on many levels as a parent who actively chose to enroll my children in the Lawrence public school system. I am against the thought of closing schools in the neighborhoods that need it most, and the sense I get is that these are the schools that are on the chopping block. Children in lower income neighborhoods need the resources that our schools have to offer. Making elementary school students walk more than two miles when many parents don't have the ability to drive their children to school will have a negative impact on so many families. I also feel that the community survey was poorly planned and executed. There should have been more input from the families for which school closures would be impacted, but I don't feel the survey was given to those families for some reason. Why weren't there more efforts done to include PTOs and PTAs to ensure we all had a voice instead of people who pay to get the LJ World? I'm a journalist, and I can tell you from first-hand experience that newspaper subscribers are not the demographic struggling to make ends meet as their kids attend grade school. While I don't necessarily think a 4-day school week is a bad idea, I also know it puts those same families in a difficult position where they'll need a day of daycare or Boys and Girls Club. How will they pay for that? Do they have a voice in this discussion? I'd be much more open to creative ideas that could help save funds. For example, is solar power an option now that the Inflation Reduction Act has been signed into law and more resources are helping fund solutions like that? We say we believe in diversity and inclusion within our school system. My question is this: what brand of diversity is it that you support? I don't believe these proposed solutions support the marginalized populations that need it the most.</p>  |
| 1/26/2023 0:04:14  | <p>Although budget changes appear to be necessary within USD 497, this process seems to be lacking credibility and candor. For example, members of the Futures Planning Committee have reported to me and to others in the community, including teachers who are repeating these reports to parents and others, that the four-day school week schedule was a last-minute proposal asserted by district administrators rather than consultants. These reports allege that the proposal is not budget-driven and, instead, would serve only as a recruitment and retention tool for the district. Helpful as such a tool might be, it's disingenuous to shroud it as a budget measure and sneak it past those who may be more willing to accept that schedule change with the understanding that it would address a purported budget crisis. In other words, it feels like a lie. In addition to this candor issue, the schedule change would impose an enormous social burden on the community. I hear KNEA and the Lewis administration state repeatedly that schools are not daycare centers. I agree — schools are not just daycare centers. Teachers are not babysitters. This position, however, ignores the basic reality that schools provide a necessary social service throughout the workweek, keeping children engaged and safe while parents and families are working. Many will not have the resources or other means to find alternative coverage if USD 497 moves to a four-day week. I'm not sure sufficient alternatives exist within Lawrence, even for those with the resources to afford it. Speaking to FPC members about their role, some feel under-informed, under-qualified, and ill-equipped to make the recommendation they've been asked to provide. Committee members staffing the information session I attended were completely unable to answer the most basic questions from attendees about how each proposed budget reduction item was calculated. Nobody could provide even a loose description of how these numbers were reached. How is this process supposed to be viewed by the public when those at its core lack confidence in the process?</p> |
| 1/26/2023 11:40:00 | <p>A 4 -day school week is a terrible idea. Harmful to student education and would create a major problem for working parents.</p>   |
| 1/26/2023 18:17:20 | <p>The size of classes needs to be evaluated. My son is in a 3rd grade classroom with 32 kids in it and this is too many students. I love our school and the district we live in but when we bought our house the student/teacher ratio was much lower. We are thinking about selling our home this spring. While looking for a new home unfortunately staying in Lawrence and in this district is looking less desirable. Right now that is the only option I can see my family has for the success of our children.</p>  |