



## USD 497 News Release

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### **School Board Discusses Support for Effective Instruction**

#### **Student Recognition**

The school board recognized three student winners of the Lawrence Juneteenth ‘Good Trouble’ Essay Contest. Becca Craft and Yejun Yun, Free State High sophomores, and Mahaya Strahle, Lawrence High sophomore, earned first, second, and third place, respectively.

“I view good trouble as doing something that was bound to need to happen,” wrote Strahle, who called civil rights leader John Lewis a personal hero. “There is always going to be someone who goes against the norm or the rules. There’s always going to be someone who sees a wrong in this world and chooses not to ignore it but to acknowledge it and fix it. Fear should not get in the way of speaking up for what is right,” she wrote.

Yun wrote in his essay of the necessity of good trouble, “It is a sign that problems are being fixed.” He said Lewis’ life personified that “everyone is obligated and has the power to fight injustice in every way possible.”

Craft cited horror stories from news headlines in her essay. She wrote, “Today, far too many things are majorly affected by an unchangeable and uncontrollable fact – the color of a person’s skin . . . It is a harsh, inescapable normal, and it is time for a change.”

#### **Public Comment**

Several members of the Personnel Association of Lawrence-Communication Workers of America (PAL-CWA) attended the board meeting. During public comment, three classified staff members shared personal stories and asked the board to increase salaries for classified employees, such as paraeducators, food service, and custodial staff.

#### **Student Instruction**

Director of Instruction and Professional Development Leah Wisdom shared with the board a report about how Lawrence Public Schools implements and supports effective instructional practices. Wisdom said that the district’s multi-tiered system of support, called CigT, is a framework for ensuring equity and access to engage all students across a full range of needs – academic, social-emotional, and behavioral.

“We want quality instruction and engagement practices for all of our students,” said Wisdom.

The district’s Instructional Framework includes evidence-based, high-yield instructional strategies that provide educators a common vocabulary and inform school building and district goals and professional development planning.

“We don’t just include in our framework what works, but what works best,” said Wisdom.

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Wisdom cited professional development, teacher feedback, and access to student data as key to the action plan. Other components include CigT leadership teams at each school and instructional coaches who work with teachers as they make decisions about meeting student needs. A teacher feedback tool called DigiCoach is used to track key observations during classroom walkthroughs and to monitor what instructional practices show up in classrooms and what adjustments need to be made.

A key question the district asks, Wisdom said, is “How do we support teachers in utilizing the framework to be reflective in practice and empower students to take ownership of their learning?”

### **New Business**

The board approved the construction of an ADA-accessible Permaculture Garden at Free State High. The mission of the student-led project is to create a garden that promotes the three ethics of permaculture: earth care, fair share, and people care. The garden will provide cross-curricular opportunities, hands-on learning, and promote diversity and biodiversity.

The city of Lawrence approved the garden plan and construction permit. Every is donating the lumber for the garden beds, benches, tables, and gazebo.

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