



USD 497 News Release

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Board Approves Business Items on Consent; Discusses Professional Development Plan

Past President Recognition

Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lewis thanked Past President Shannon Kimball for her leadership during the 2022-2023 school year. This followed the passing of the gavel from Kimball to President Kelly Jones on July 10. "Shannon gives 100% to her volunteer service to the community. She reads, studies, reaches out to others for consultation and input, visits schools, speaks to community groups, and puts much thought and deliberation into her board service," said Dr. Lewis.

First elected to the board in 2011, Kimball previously served as president in 2014-2015 and 2017-2018. "The board, district, and community have benefited from Shannon's background in educational law, her twelve years of board experience, and her personal involvement in public education policy and advocacy at the local, state, and national levels," Lewis added.

Following a district tradition, Kimball received a piece of original student artwork, a necklace made of nickel, sterling silver, and rose quartz, created by Jocelyn Cahwee, a member of Lawrence High's 2023 graduating class. Emily Markoulatos served as Cahwee's art teacher.

LMH Health Leadership Academy Recognition

By day, school board member Erica Hill works as LMH Health's director of health equity, inclusion, and diversity and LMH Health Foundation's finance and strategic initiatives director. Hill introduced to the board the fifth class of the hospital's summer leadership academy: Autumn Beach, Alexandria Brinker, Steven Duan, Jaelizza Garcia, Naomi Porter, Brandon Sikes, and Maxx Krause.

These high school students received a jump-start on careers in healthcare administration, medicine, and allied health while learning about healthcare leadership and professional development opportunities. The academy provides students hands-on healthcare executive experience, field trips, workshops, and trainings; a paid summer internship, college and career coaching, volunteer service opportunities, and a scholarship to support their postsecondary education.

LMH Health executives mentor academy interns as they learn leadership and communication skills and explore healthcare careers. The students praised their relationships with this year's mentors: Russ Johnson, president and chief executive officer; Jared Abel, associate vice president of strategy and service lines; Sheryle D'Amico, senior vice president of strategic integration; and Rebecca Smith, vice president of strategic communications and LMH Health Foundation executive director.

After earning Certified Nursing Assistant credentials at Lawrence College and Career Center, Beach, a rising senior, applied for the academy to learn about the different roles it takes to run a hospital. Brinker, a rising Lawrence High junior, credited the academy with cementing nursing as a chosen career. "I have learned so much from this academy and will carry it with me throughout my life," Brinker said.

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Duan, a Free State student, has career aspirations to work in cardiology while Sikes, also of Free State, plans to major in human biology and pursue a career in orthopedic surgery. “I knew there were doctors and nurses, but I knew there was something more that helped the gears turn,” Sikes said. “I got to shadow doctors in surgery. That was awesome!”

Porter, also a Firebird, spoke of gaining an interest in radiology and enjoying shadowing staff at OrthoKansas. Garcia, another Firebird, shared about learning that curiosity and life-long learning are important leadership characteristics.

Krause also lauded the experience. “I applied because I knew I wanted to work in the medical field, but I had no clue about the options. Krause joined other interns in mentioning Dr. Michael Thompson’s organ show. Thompson works in anatomic and clinical pathology. “It was really cool to hold an actual heart and brains, man!” Krause said.

The academy interns will complete a capstone project. They plan to delve into topics about the effects of gun violence on health care, the development of artificial intelligence and its effect on the healthcare industry, neurodiversity and equity, prescription drugs and their financial strain on patients, mental health in youth, and transgender health, among others.

Dr. Lewis encouraged other local businesses and organizations to mirror the mentorship program. “The workforce is right here in our classrooms, the sooner we can wrap our arms around them, the better for them. They are solving current problems and issues that are not problems yet,” he said.

“I am very impressed with the topics you have chosen...and watching how you connected the dots for your careers. Thank you for coming and sharing your path with us,” said Board President Kelly Jones.

School Fees

The board approved several business items on consent, including the annual schedule of student fees. Basic fees for the 2023-24 school year include an Instructional Resources Fee of \$100 for K-5 and LVS K-12 students and \$150 for students in grades 6-12; an Activity Trip Transportation Fee of \$15 assessed K-12; and a 1:1 technology Device Fee of \$15 for K-12 students, including LVS.

Additional fees may apply based on student course enrollment, extra- and co-curricular participation, instrument rental, and purchase of an activity ticket and/or parking permit. The schedule also includes special fees for Pre-K, fully-paid early childhood and Montessori enrollment, LVS additional course acquisitions, and some summer course offerings.

The fee schedule is the same as last year’s, except for a \$10 decrease in the Device Fee for students in grades 9-12. This is due to the board’s approval in January of providing 1:1 iPads with touchpad keyboard cases and digital pencils instead of MacBooks at the high-school level this year.

Full or partial fee waivers are available for students qualifying for free or reduced-priced school meals or hardship waivers. Credit card payments and payment plan options also are available. The district encourages all families that may be eligible to submit the Free and Reduced-Priced Meal Application online at www.usd497.org/FoodService and complete the Consent for Disclosure Form to share eligibility for applicable fee waivers. Food Service staff can assist families with questions about the application and form at 785-832-5000 or fs.office.staff@usd497.org.

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Professional Development Plan

The only report on the board agenda was about the district’s Professional Development Plan. The administration shared action plans related to district goals for improving students’ reading, math, and post-secondary success.

Leah Wisdom, director of instruction and professional development, referred to the district’s strategic plan and each school’s building improvement goals and asked, “What do we need to implement our plan and meet our goals?”

She explained that the Professional Development Plan outlines learning activities for educators during the 2023-2024 school year. Teachers will receive support in high-impact instructional strategies, social and emotional learning, and student engagement, among other areas. Wisdom shared with the board data points used to determine professional learning needs and to plan support.

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