



USD 497 News Release

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Board Discusses Certified Negotiations Team's REVISED Instructional Hours Make-up Schedule

During a special meeting called by Lawrence Board of Education President Kelly Jones Friday afternoon, members of the Certified Negotiations Team presented a revised plan for making up instructional hours necessary to meet the state-required minimum 1,116 hours for the 2023-2024 school year. The changes are necessary due to the district's use of four inclement weather days in January and guidance from a state auditor that the 1.5 days of parent-teacher conferences held prior to the start of school in August could not be counted toward state requirements.

Educators Sarah Rossillon and Josh Spradlin and district administrator Kristen Ryan shared this joint statement on behalf of the Certified Negotiations Team:

"The Certified Negotiations team met at 10:30 a.m. Friday, March 8, to discuss school schedule changes needed in the inclement weather make-up minute plan to meet state requirements. Concerns were brought forth after a plan was communicated on March 6 that differed from the agreement made at the table on March 1 before the auditor alerted the district of the need for additional make-up minutes to meet the state requirement of 1,116 hours. In order to find a solution that maintained state requirements while upholding the certified staff's Master Agreement, the team met to find potential solutions that could better address the needs of our staff and students.

The district acknowledged that the Interest-Based Bargaining process was not followed completely for this issue and procedural changes will be made as we move forward. Please find the agreed schedule and calendar changes below for middle schools and both high schools.

The certified negotiations team greatly appreciates everyone's participation on their day off, especially the over 175 staff that joined us online.

Please join us at 4:30 p.m. on April 4 for the next Certified Negotiations Team Meeting either in person at the Facilities & Operations conference room, 711 E. 23rd St., or in the Certified Negotiations Team Meeting Virtual Room."

Revised Make-up Plan

Elementary Schools

- The elementary school schedules include more hours than the state requires, so no changes to the calendar or make-up time are necessary.

Middle Schools

- Middle schools will add five minutes to the beginning of each school day, beginning March 18.
- School will start at 8:10 a.m. and dismiss at 2:56 p.m., except Wednesday (8:10 a.m.-1:53 p.m.).
- Students will attend full days of school May 20-23, except for Wed., May 22 (8:10 a.m. - 1:53 p.m.).
- Students will attend a half-day on Fri., May 24 (8:10-11:30 a.m.), with no lunch service.

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Middle School Staff Schedule Changes

- Team Professional Learning Communities (PLC) 7:30-8:00 a.m. Mon.-Thurs. and PLC and Collaboration Time from 1:55-3:21 p.m. on Wed.
- April 12 will be a staff (flexible and asynchronous) Professional Development Day instead of a Work/Plan Day.

Free State High School

Because Free State High has participated in the state redesign program, its current daily schedule is slightly different than Lawrence High's.

- Free State will add six minutes to the end of each school day, beginning March 18 through the end of the school year.
- School will start at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:16 p.m. (1:26 p.m. dismissal on Wed.).
- Students in grades 9-11 will attend full days for the last week of school, May 20-24, except Wed., May 22 (8:00 a.m.-1:26 p.m.).
- Seniors' last week of school and finals schedules are unaffected and will not change.
- Free State will continue its Extended Class Time (ECT).
- Free State staff Collaboration Time: Wed. 2:21-3:21 p.m.

Lawrence High School

Lawrence High's current schedule does not require the addition of minutes to the school day.

- Start and dismissal times remain 8:00 a.m.-3:10 p.m., and Wed. 8:00 a.m.-1:35 p.m.
- Students in grades 9-11 will attend full days for the last week of school, May 20-24, except Wed., May 22 (8:00 a.m. - 1:35 p.m.).
- Seniors' last week of school and finals schedules are unaffected and will not change.
- LHS staff Collaboration Time: Wed. 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Due to the lateness of the hour, an additional news release will be posted to www.usd497.org/News with information about the board's discussion with Certified Negotiations Team members during the specially called meeting this afternoon. It will include a timeline of the work that led to the make-up plan announced on Thursday, listening to feedback received from students, staff, and families; and board recommendations related to future planning. The board, administration, and Calendar Committee will reexamine the 2024-2025 school calendar, approved by the board February 12. Changes to next year's calendar could follow, such as the addition of school hours to prevent a potential shortage again next year.

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