

**Regular Monthly Meeting of the Kearney Public Schools Board of Education**  
**Kearney Public Schools Board of Education**  
**Monday, March 11, 2024 at 5:30 PM**  
**2nd Floor Staff Development Room, Administration Building**  
**320 W 24th St**  
**Kearney, NE 68845**

**1. Routine Business**

**1.A. Call to Order**

President Gaasch called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

**1.B. Open Meetings Act Announcement**

This is an open, public meeting of the Kearney Public Schools Board of Education, and a copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted in this room.

**1.C. Pledge of Allegiance**

**1.D. Roll Call**

Attendance Taken at 5:30 PM.

Amy Barth: Present

Drew Blessing: Present

Steve Gaasch: Present

Kathy Gifford: Present

Paul Hazard: Present

John Icenogle: Present

1.D.I. Excuse Absent Board Member

**1.E. Approval of the Agenda**

Move to approve the agenda for the meeting, as presented. This motion, made by Kathy Gifford and seconded by John Icenogle, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard:

Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

**2. Recognitions**

2.A. Recognition of Head Coach Brandon Cool and the KHS Football Team for Receiving the 2023-2024 NFF National High School Academic Excellence Award

- Mr. Jeff Ganz, Kearney High School Principal, thanked the Board for the invitation to recognize the KHS coaching staff and student athletes and the time and effort that they put into earning this award.
- Coach Cool gave special thanks to Mrs. Holoubeck for all of her efforts in gathering the appropriate information and to Mr. Hogue for his letter of recommendation. He highlighted some of the qualifications of the KHS football team (43 student athletes). He introduced seniors Jack Edwards and Eli Randolph as leaders at KHS on and off the field.

- Jack Edwards thanked the Board, administration, and coaches for making it possible for the KHS football team to win this award, which helps set them up for success after high school with the possibility of earning scholarships.
- Eli Randolph echoed Jack and, in addition, thanked the athletic boosters for their support, noting that collectively, this support makes it possible for them to excel on and off the field.
- There was discussion about Jack and Eli's future plans. Jack has accepted the RLOP scholarship at UNK and will be playing football as well. Eli has accepted a UNK Regent scholarship and is enrolled in a Pre-PA program.

#### 2.B. Recognition of Head Coach Ryan Bauer and KHS Wrestler Jack Sponenburgh as the 2024 Class A, 106 LB State Champion

- Mr. Ganz voiced his pride in the KHS wrestling team and Coach Bauer. He noted Jack Sponenburgh's hard-fought battle to win the state championship in the 106 pound weight class.
- Coach Bauer spoke about the message to his team at the state tournament, which is that wins and losses don't define who you are. He stated that Jack pinned his way through the bracket against the odds. Coach Bauer said that he, the KHS coaching staff, and administration are most proud of the way that Jack won, noting his high character and sportsmanship in encouraging those that he defeated along the way.
- Jack thanked the Board for the opportunity to participate and compete in the KHS wrestling program.

#### 2.C. Recognition of Head Coach Meggie Rusher and the KHS Dance Catz as 2024 State Runner-Up at the Nebraska State Dance Championship

- Mr. Ganz spoke about his pride in coach Meggie Rusher and the KHS Dance Catz, noting the hard work and early hours they put in to achieve winning the state runner-up title.
- Coach Rusher stated that this is the largest dance team they have ever had and the first time that a team, other than a Lincoln or Omaha team, has brought home first or second. She acknowledged the leadership on the team, noting that there are four seniors. Coach Rusher stated that there are 60 kicks required in the state dance routine, but the Dance Catz did 74, always aiming higher to be successful. She thanked the Board, parents, administration, and Bearcat fans.

#### 2.D. Recognition of Art Teacher Ana Rodriguez Trejo and Sunrise Middle School Student Emma Payne as a State Scholastic Art Award Winner and National Qualifier

- Sunrise Middle School Assistant Principal, Erin Jones, stated that the theme at SMS is to be a champion. She introduced Ana Rodriguez Trejo, art teacher at SMS.
- Ms. Rodriguez Trejo stated that over 300,000 students across the nation submit artwork, and approximately one in twenty is awarded a gold key, silver key, or honorable mention. As a gold key winner, Emma's artwork will qualify to compete for a national award and the possibility of a scholarship.
- There was discussion about the pictures of Emma's artwork.

- Ms. Rodriguez Trejo thanked the Board and administration for all of their support.

### **3. Presentations**

#### **3.A. Presentation by Bright Futures Preschool on Early Childhood**

- Mrs. Megan Schmidt, Principal at Bright Futures Preschool, gave a presentation on the importance of early childhood development. She spoke about the timeframe from birth through age 8 as being the most impactful time in a child's brain development. Bright Futures prides itself on providing quality environments for children to learn in by creating relationships, providing high-quality materials and curriculum, and having highly trained staff. Mrs. Schmidt reviewed the programs offered at Bright Futures and stated that priority is given to 4-year-olds, and students, and families with the highest needs.
- There was discussion about when applications open, class sizes, state funding, and what happens to children that do not get in. Mrs. Schmidt said that they provide a list of other community opportunities for students who do not get into Bright Futures, and they encourage them to reapply next year too.

#### **3.B. Legislative Update**

- Mr. Mundorf stated that public hearings are now complete, but committees can still prioritize bills or packages to bring to the floor. He gave a summary of current bills to watch (see attachment).
- There was some discussion regarding teacher/administrator feedback about classroom map changes.

### **4. Public Participation/Comment**

- Brooke Ritter voiced her excitement that there was work being done on curation protocols. She stated that she feels that there should be some type of book rating system to ensure proper grade level for comprehension as well as appropriate content. Brooke spoke about her understanding of book availability at KPS, citing the book *The Bluest Eye*, which is set at the level of an AP course, requiring signed parent permission for students to read this book, and through this process, this book becomes available for all students to read without parental permission.
- Kathy Adams read information from Nebraska Statute 28-808 that addresses obscene literature and materials. She stated that she has heard from several experts that sexually explicit materials are harmful to minors, as their brains are not mature enough to handle this information. Kathy stated that there should not be any young adult books on school library shelves.
- Darrell Karg asked the Board to do their duty in ensuring that inappropriate material is not available to children.

### **5. Board Reports**

#### **5.A. NASB Legislative Committee Report**

- Mr. Blessing said that information was emailed to Board members regarding a revenue committee call update tomorrow from 12:00 to 1:00 PM. He spoke about LB 43 which talks about open meetings and public records. Mr. Blessing stated that a piece of this bill, which addresses public participation, may require that public participation be available at ALL school board meetings. He believes that this will pass.

## 6. Consent Agenda

Move to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as presented. This motion, made by John Icenogle and seconded by Drew Blessing, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

6.A. Approval of Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting; the February 21, 2024 Special Meeting; and the March 6, 2024 Board Committee of the Whole Meeting, of the Board of Education

6.B. Approval of the March 2024 Claims

6.C. Approval of the March 2024 Financial Reports

## 7. Regular Agenda - Personnel

7.A. Acceptance of Resignations and Retirements

- The Board thanked all staff that are retiring as well as those moving on in their lives for their service to the district and wished them well. Special thanks were given to Dr. Endorf for his work in creating the KPS Emergency Operations Plan and for everything that he has done for the district.

Move to accept, with regret, the resignations of Paige Uhing, 1st grade teacher at Emerson Elementary School; Emily Noble, 1st grade teacher at Park Elementary School; Ashley Bush, business teacher at Kearney High School; Kirk McLoed, 5th grade teacher at Emerson Elementary School; Mitch Olson, special education teacher for Kearney Public Schools; Jenn DeBord, special education teacher at the Hanny Arram Center; Heidi Straka, 1st grade teacher at Bryant Elementary School; Rebecca Dunn, kindergarten teacher at Emerson Elementary School; Jason Boyd, assistant principal at Kearney High School; Danielle May, 8th grade science teacher at Horizon Middle School; Lisa Cool, school psychologist at Kearney Public Schools; Dr. Dan Endorf, Director of Student Services and Safety at Kearney Public Schools; and Erikka Rhodes, special education teacher at Kearney High School, effective the end of the 2023-2024 school year. Accept with regret, the retirement resignations of Kris Hillburn, 3rd grade teacher at Bryant Elementary School; Robin Bennett, 1st grade teacher at Meadowlark Elementary School, and Eleanor Arens, 2nd grade teacher at Buffalo Hills Elementary School, effective the end of the 2023-2024 school year. This motion, made by Drew Blessing and seconded by Kathy Gifford, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

## 7.B. Approval of the Employment of Certificated Staff

- The Board thanked Dr. Herrmann for all of her efforts in filling open positions with diverse teachers, experienced and new.

Move to approve the employment of certificated staff, Michelle Hellman, BA+9, Step 3, 1.0 FTE 3rd grade teacher at Bryant Elementary School; Drew Danielson, BA+27, Step 10, 1.0 FTE permanent substitute teacher at Kearney High School; Cortney Hoelck, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE 1st grade teacher at Bryant Elementary School; Terianne Knott, BA+27, Step 8, 1.0 FTE science teacher at Kearney High School; Michaela Becker, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE 2nd grade teacher at Buffalo Hills Elementary School; Kylee Rasmussen, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE 2nd grade teacher at Buffalo Hills Elementary School; Amber Brown, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE 1st grade teacher at Emerson Elementary School; and Evie Schroeder, BA, Step 7, 1.0 FTE 5th grade teacher at Emerson Elementary School; Katheryn Pacheco, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE ELL teacher at Horizon Middle School; Shelbee Lemburg, BA+18, Step 5, 1.0 FTE 1st grade teacher at Meadowlark Elementary School; and Jaycee Lapp, BA, Step 3, 1.0 FTE math teacher at Sunrise Middle School, for the 2024-2025 school year. This motion, made by Kathy Gifford and seconded by Amy Barth, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea  
Yea: 6, Nay: 0

## 8. Regular Agenda - Business

### 8.A. Approval of the Purchase of a New Baseball Scoreboard for Memorial Field from Digital Scoreboards at a Cost of \$206,500

- Dr. Loofe reviewed his presentation for the Board and the public. There was discussion about this scoreboard as well as others that have been purchased throughout the district, being a source for raising advertising dollars to pay for themselves and even exceeding these purchases to replenish the Activities Advertising Account. Mr. Hogue was praised for his ability to raise funds.

Move to approve the purchase of a new baseball scoreboard for Memorial Field from Digital Scoreboards in the amount of \$206,500, as presented. This motion, made by Paul Hazard and seconded by John Icenogle, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea  
Yea: 6, Nay: 0

### 8.B. Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding Between Kearney Public Schools and the City of Kearney for the Donation of the Purchased Scoreboard

- Dr. Loofe read the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Kearney and Kearney Public Schools.
- It was discussed that the City of Kearney will take care of the installation of the new scoreboard. The strong partnership between KPS and the City of Kearney was noted in making this field and scoreboard available to the community.

Move to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Kearney Public Schools and the City of Kearney to donate the purchased scoreboard to the City for use by all field user groups, with KPS maintaining scoreboard advertising and collecting revenue accordingly, as presented. This motion, made by Drew Blessing and seconded by Kathy Gifford, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

## 9. Regular Agenda - Miscellaneous

### 9.A. Approval of the First Reading of Adopted Board Policy 6288 "Artificial Intelligence"

- Mr. Mundorf stated that he does not believe that we will encounter a more impactful and dramatic issue in public education in the next decade than artificial intelligence. He read policy 6288, Artificial Intelligence, which was crafted by legal counsel, stating that he believes that it includes what the Board requested. Specifically, placing the decision-making in the classroom teachers' hands. Mr. Mundorf spoke about discussions with district leadership in regard to the creation of a K-12 AI Framework, which would be led by Mrs. Paider and Mr. Edwards and would include administration and teachers across the district, with those in favor of AI and those against it as well.
- There was discussion about the need to be proactive in approaching AI in education and the fact that the process will continue to evolve over time. Overall, the Board expressed their comfort with this policy as a good place to start.

Move to approve the first reading of adopted board policy 6288 "Artificial Intelligence", as presented. This motion, made by Kathy Gifford and seconded by Drew Blessing, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

## 10. Next Meeting

- The next regular meeting of the Kearney Public Schools Board of Education will be held on April 8, 2024 at 5:30 P.M. in the Staff Development Room in the Administration Building at 320 West 24th St, Kearney, NE 68845.

## 11. Adjournment

- Meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.

Move to adjourn the meeting. This motion, made by John Icenogle and seconded by Kathy Gifford, Passed.

Amy Barth: Yea, Drew Blessing: Yea, Steve Gaasch: Yea, Kathy Gifford: Yea, Paul Hazard: Yea, John Icenogle: Yea

Yea: 6, Nay: 0

## Notice of Meeting

This meeting was publicized in the Kearney Hub on March 7, 2024; radio stations KGFW and KKPR; and KSNB and KHGI T.V.

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Kathy Gifford, Secretary