MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 9, 2026
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

RUSSELL COUNTY USD 407
BOARD OF EDUCATION
400 N ELM ST | RUSSELL, KS 67665
PH: 785-483-2173 | FX: 785-483-2175

Mission: *USD 407 empowers students to become well-rounded citizens by providing high-quality instruction and creating positive relationships to promote growth today, tomorrow, and into the future.*

Goal A: *Culture and Climate - USD 407 will foster relationships with stakeholders and establish partnerships to create a unified and a positive learning environment for students and staff.*

Goal B: *College and Career Preparation - USD 407 will establish partnerships with the community, improve Career and Technical Education (CTE) and maintain high expectations to ensure students become successful adults who contribute to their communities.*

Goal C: *Facilities - To provide updated and safe facilities to meet the educational needs of students.*

Goal D: *Recruit, Retain, and Recognize Staff - Continue to cultivate the positive culture of USD 407 to support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff.*

58-134 **CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Brett Mai called the USD 407 Board of Education regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the District Administration Office boardroom. Additional board members in attendance were Dr. Joyce Ellis, Mrs. Deanna Myers, Mrs. Nancy Schmitt, Mrs. Kathy Wallert, Mr. Ron Wedel and Ms. Mandy Zweifel. Ms. Zweifel led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Others in attendance included:

- Mr. Jordan Perez, Superintendent,
- Dr. Andrew Dempewolf, Principal of Russell Junior-Senior High School;
- Mrs. Katie Revell, Principal of Simpson Elementary School;
- Mr. Jay Sanders, Activities Director/Assistant Principal of Russell Junior-Senior High School
- Mrs. Katrina Woelk, Finance Director;
- Mr. Cody Campbell, IT Director;
- Miss Madison Wieger, Senior Class Representative;
- Mr. Joey Hurla, Junior Class Representative; and
- Mrs. Jane Cline, Board Clerk.

58-135 **BOARD FORUM**

Dr. Ellis and Mr. Wedel stated due to scheduling conflicts they will not be able to attend the Board retreat in June.

58-136 **CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Approval of Agenda
B. Approval of Minutes
1. February 9, 2026 - Regular Meeting

C. Examination and Payment of Bills

1. Activity Accounts
2. Bank Reconciliation Report
3. Budget Report
4. Cash Flow and Budget Report
5. Check Journal
6. Expenditure Report
7. Petty Cash Accounts
8. Russell County Area Community Foundation Funds

D. Grants and Donations

1. Russell Junior-Senior High School
   a. $250 - Russell County Area Community Foundation for Athletics
   b. $350 - Waudby's for the Girls' and Boys' Wrestling Programs
   c. $1,500 - Russell County Area Community Foundation (Leon Huxman Donor Advised Fund) for the High School Track Program
   d. $300 - High Plains Farm Credit for FFA
   e. $200 - Kansas Farm Bureau to FFA from winning 2nd place at the NW District Discussion Meet
   f. $752.97 - Former Russell Rangers Club for Baseball
2. Simpson Elementary School
   a. $5,000 - Plains Education Grant for End of Year Purchasing and Classroom Instructional Items and Materials
3. Bickerdyke Elementary School
   a. $1,666.22 - SchoolStore for Book Buddy Fundraiser

Mrs. Myers moved, and Dr. Ellis seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion carried 7 – 0.

58-137 **PUBLIC FORUM**

No one from the public addressed the Board under this agenda item.

58-138 **STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION**

A. Employees of the Month

Tori Ansley, Secretary at Bickerdyke Elementary School, and Karly Standly, 4th Grade Teacher at Bickerdyke Elementary School, were selected as the February Employees of the Month. Recipients were provided a monetary gift from the Board of Education and Community for Classrooms.

B. Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics Correspondence

A letter of appreciation was shared from the Dole Institute of Politics commending teachers and administrators for hosting an opportunity for students to learn about our hometown hero, Senator Bob Dole and the role of civic participation.

C. Student Recognition - RHS State Wrestling Qualifiers

Russell High School wrestling state qualifiers and their coaches were recognized for their accomplishments at the State competition, and congratulations were extended to all competitors. The Lady Bronco wrestlers were also recognized for winning the State Championship, marking the first time a girls' team from Russell has earned a state title. Coach Luke Keller was congratulated for being selected as the 3-2-1A West Regional Coach of the Year and the 3-2-1A Girls' Wrestling Sportsmanship Coach of the Year0.

58-139 CURRICULUM CORNER

A. PE/Health Curriculum

Dr. Dempewolf reported that the PE/Health curriculum was removed during the last six-year curriculum cycle, and the district shifted to using Edgenuity. Edgenuity has since been discontinued in USD 407. Dr. Ellis noted that establishing a comprehensive PE/Health curriculum with standards and benchmarks would help measure student growth and asked Dr. Dempewolf to research options for adopting a formal curriculum during the next six-year adoption cycle.

Dr. Ellis made a motion to accept the bid from Goodheart-Wilcox Publisher for health curriculum as presented for $4,955.39. Mrs. Myers seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

B. Kubota (Diesel Mechanics) Curriculum

Dr. Dempewolf presented a Kubota software quote and requested the board's approval. The software will not be purchased at this time; however, curriculum needs to be adopted prior to launching the Kubota program.

Mr. Mai moved, and Dr. Ellis seconded a motion to adopt the curriculum for the diesel mechanics program. Motion carried 7 – 0.

58-140 DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. FFA Farm Improvement

This conversation was tabled until the April regular meeting.

B. RJSHS - Video Board Update

Mr. Perez noted the March 1 deadline to secure funding for a video board had passed and recommended approval of the quote from Daktronics to replace the scoreboard damaged in the 2024 storm with a comparable product.

Mr. Wedel made a motion to approve the purchase of the scoreboard from Daktronics for $43,894.00. Dr. Ellis seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

C. Elementary Playgrounds

Mammoth Construction is still working on plans for the BES playground. The discussion was tabled until the April regular meeting.

D. Excess Property Disposal

The Board discussed the disposal of a 2018 16-foot enclosed trailer and a 2003 34-passenger bus that is scheduled for retirement in 2028. Discussion followed about the need to dispose of obsolete shop equipment as well. The Board agreed to table the disposal of excess property until the April 2026 meeting.

In a separate conversation, staff members requested permission to explore opportunities to engage with the public library to determine the feasibility of donating or selling excess library materials remaining at the District Office.

Dr. Ellis made a motion to allow donation of the excess library materials to the public library or other entities. Mr. Wedel seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

E. Summer Board Retreat

Mr. Perez reported the Board Retreat is scheduled for June 27th from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the District Office. Topics will include Data Review, Needs Assessment, Capital Outlay Plan, Facility Priorities, Strategic Plan, and CTE planning. Mrs. Cline was asked to create a luncheon sign-up sheet for the event.

F. RJSHS Curtain Project Update

Gratitude was expressed to the Booster Club for enhancing the RJSHS stage environment and for initiating the Stage Curtain project. The district's cost for the project was $11,966.89.

G. KASB Membership Renewal and Season Pass

Dr. Ellis moved, and Mr. Wedel seconded a motion to renew the KASB membership, season pass and legal assistance fund for a total of $15,802.21. Motion carried 7 – 0.

H. At-Risk Funding

Mr. Perez explained how the future of at-risk funding will be tied to state assessment results and demonstrated the financial impact.

I. Bond Election

The Board discussed options for addressing facility needs without bond funding. The consensus was to reevaluate facility priorities and explore whether some larger projects could be broken into smaller, more manageable phases. Lease-purchase options were also considered as a potential funding strategy. Reconvening a smaller steering

committee and collaborating with the Bronco Foundation to help guide facility planning and fundraising efforts was also discussed.

Mrs. Schmitt requested support to research adding the District Office (Ruppenthal Middle School) building to the Kansas Historical Register to determine if viable options exist for revitalizing the facility, noting its importance as a vital community structure.

Mrs. Woelk shared information about a grant program to replace older diesel buses (2009 or older). The state would cover 75% of the cost, with the district responsible for 25%. There was consensus to research and pursue the grant opportunity.

58-141 DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

A. President of the Board

Mr. Mai thanked Mrs. Revell for her Facebook response following the bond election results. He encouraged administrators and staff to continue their efforts and stated that the community supports the schools but does not wish to see higher taxes. Mr. Perez and Mr. Mai were recognized as First Place Champions in the Community for Classroom bowling tournament.

B. Superintendent

Mr. Perez thanked Community for Classrooms for hosting the bowling tournament.

C. Administrative Reports

Mrs. Revell gave a shout out to Brianna Saryerwinnie for being selected to win a Nex-Tech Teacher award to support speech language services.

D. Activities Director

Mr. Sanders shared the number of athletes participating in spring sports and noted participation is high compared to previous years.

E. Finance Director

Mrs. Woelk reported that she continues to seek new grant opportunities, and her report includes a list of grant applications that are currently pending.

F. Food Service Director

No additional information was shared beyond the written report.

G. Maintenance Director

No additional information was shared beyond the written report.

H. Technology Director

Mr. Campbell reported the MACE conference he attended was very AI heavy and he learned a great deal that will be shared with staff members.

I. Transportation Director
No report was provided.

J. Student Representative
No report was given.

58-142 **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

A. Foundation Committee - Ron Wedel
Mr. Wedel reported the Foundation discussed the outcome of the bond election and is exploring ways to support the community moving forward. He also noted that the Foundation will be working concession stands on April 23 and May 1 as a fundraising effort.

B. Steering Committee - Brett Mai/Mandy Zweifel/Nancy Schmitt
Ms. Zweifel reported the Steering Committee will reconvene on Wednesday to debrief and think about next steps. Mr. Perez was asked to send out an invitation to the community. Mr. Mai thanked the Steering Committee and public who participated in the discussions.

Mr. Mai declared a 15-minute recess beginning at 7:06 p.m. Open session reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

58-143 **STUDENT MATTERS**
No action or discussion was taken under this agenda item.

58-144 **NEGOTIATIONS**
At 7:21 p.m., Mr. Wedel made a motion to enter executive session to discuss teacher negotiations pursuant to matters relating to employer/employee negotiations under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 7:31 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Mrs. Myers seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Open session resumed at 7:31 p.m. Dr. Ellis made a motion to re-enter executive session to discuss teacher negotiations pursuant to matters relating to employer/employee negotiations under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 7:36 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Mr. Wedel seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Open session resumed at 7:36 p.m. Mr. Wedel made a motion to re-enter executive session to discuss teacher negotiations pursuant to matters relating to employer/employee negotiations under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 7:47 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Dr. Ellis seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Open session resumed at 7:47 p.m. No action was taken.

58-145 **STAFFING**

At 7:49 p.m., Dr. Ellis made a motion to enter executive session to discuss staffing pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 8:06 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Mr. Wedel seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Open session resumed at 8:06 p.m. Dr. Ellis made a motion to re-enter executive session to discuss staffing pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 8:21 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Mr. Wedel seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Mr. Perez stepped out of executive session at 8:08 p.m. Mr. Perez re-entered executive session at 8:10 p.m.

Open session resumed at 8:21 p.m. Mr. Mai made a motion to re-enter executive session to discuss staffing pursuant to the non-elected personnel exception under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA), with the open meeting resuming in the boardroom at 8:26 p.m. to include Mr. Perez. Mrs. Myers seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

Open session resumed at 8:26 p.m. No action was taken.

A. Retirements

No retirements were reported.

Mr. Wedel made a motion to accept the following resignations, new contracts/work agreements, and transfer request:

B. Resignations

1. Natalie Abraham - Basketball - Asst. Coach at RJHS
2. Ashley Kauten – Principal at BES
3. Cara Kenney - Asst. Volleyball at RSHS
4. Dennis Gallagher - Head Custodian at RJSHS
5. Tabor Rucker - Choir/Instrumental Teacher at RJSHS and BES
6. Tabor Rucker - Bickerdyke Band at BES
7. Tabor Rucker - Instrumental Music Supplemental at RJSHS
8. Tabor Rucker - Music - Vocal Supplemental at RJSHS

C. New Contracts/Work Agreements

1. Aden Alvarado - Track - Asst. Coach at RSHS
2. Braxton Hatch - Track - Asst. Coach at RJHS
3. Keegan Johnson - Track - Asst. Coach at RJHS

4. Kolby Johnson - Track - Head Coach at RJHS
5. Wyatt Middleton - Baseball - Asst. Coach at RSHS
6. Dylan Plummer - Golf - Asst. Coach at RSHS
7. Mandi Smith - Volleyball - Head at RJHS (2026-2027)
8. Blayze Standley - Math Teacher at RJSHS (2026-2027)
9. Kooper Tichenor - Track - Asst. Coach at RJHS
10. Tammi (Tammen) Tiffany - CAPS Teacher at BES
11. Nicholas Turner - Baseball - Asst. Coach at RSHS
12. Jordyn VonFeldt - Volleyball - Asst. Coach at RSHS (2026-2027)

D. Contract Modifications

No contract modifications were presented.

E. Transfer Request

1. Gerald Lindsey - From Custodian to Head Custodian at RJSHS

Mrs. Myers seconded the motion. Motion carried 7 – 0.

58-146 **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:31 p.m., Dr. Ellis moved, and Mr. Wedel seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried 7 - 0.

Mr. Brett Mai *04/13/2026*

Mr. Brett Mai, Board President Date

Mrs. Jane Cline *04/13/2026*

Mrs. Jane Cline, Board Clerk Date