LAWSON R-XIV School District
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April 2026 BOE Meeting

The Board of Education held its monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. Below is a summary of key business items, updates, and discussions. For the complete agenda and supporting documents, please visit the Paperless Board Meeting link.

BOE Reorganizational Meeting - Recap

April 2026 FCS/FCCLA - Board Spotlight

April 2026 School to Career & Cardinal Activities Media - Board Spotlight

Key Action Items

Parameters Bond Resolution: The Board approved a Parameters Bond Resolution to move forward with the District's Series 2026 bond sale, generating a $3 million project fund as authorized by voters in the April 7 election. This type of resolution allows the bond to be finalized within Board-approved limits, providing flexibility to secure favorable market terms while maintaining oversight.

FEMA Memorandum of Understanding: The Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Lawson Emergency Management, the Lawson Police Department, and the Lawson Fire Department to coordinate emergency response efforts during severe weather. The agreement outlines how the Barker Center and Southwest (SW) FEMA Safe Rooms will be opened and managed during tornado warnings outside of school hours, ensuring clear roles, efficient operations, and safe public access.

Extra Duties 2026-227 Salary Schedule: The Board approved the 2026–2027 Extra Duties Salary Schedule, which outlines compensation for staff who take on roles beyond their regular teaching or contracted responsibilities, such as coaching and activity sponsorships. These positions involve significant time commitments outside the school day, including evenings, weekends, and extended seasons.

May 2026 BOE Meeting Date Change: The Board approved moving its May monthly business meeting from Wednesday, May 20 to Monday, May 18 to avoid conflicts with end-of-year activities, including the last day of school for students and staff.

Key Updates & Information

Summer School 2026: Planning is underway for the K–5 summer school session, which will run from May 27 through June 24.

Early Childhood Special Education Program Evaluation: The Board reviewed the district's early childhood special education program within Cardinals Nest Preschool, which supports 3- and

4-year-old students in areas such as communication, behavior, and school readiness, with continued positive growth and outcomes.

Special Education K-12 Program Evaluation: An overview of special education and 504 programs was presented, including student data and key focus areas moving into 2026–2027. The district continues working to meet growing student needs, particularly related to IEPs and 504 plans.

Paid Leave Accrual, Use, and Buyback Policy: Work has been completed to modernize the district's paid leave structure, improving predictability, enhancing employee benefits, and strengthening financial management. A formal proposal will be presented to the Board in May for approval.

Spring 2024 Bond Update: The April 7 election was successfully completed, and planning for the Learning Lab project is moving forward on schedule. District leadership is continuing design work with Incite Design, with plans to bid the project in August and approve bids in September.

To ensure the best financial outcome, the project will be bid in two phases—one for the building shell and infrastructure, and another for interior completion. This approach will allow the district to compare costs between using a general contractor and managing portions of the project in-house before making a final decision.

Design planning is being completed across all areas to maintain flexibility, and early preparations are underway for parking lot improvements, with final completion expected by summer 2027. The district is also pursuing equipment purchases and exploring grant opportunities, including funding for a potential greenhouse to expand program offerings.

Long-Range Financial Planning Update: The district is on track to finish the current fiscal year with a positive balance, performing close to budget expectations due to conservative planning, especially in state revenue estimates. Despite tight financial conditions, continued investment in staff salaries and benefits remains a priority to support recruitment and retention.

In preparing the 2026–2027 budget, approximately $100,000 in cost efficiencies have been identified to help offset recent salary increases without impacting student programs. However, the District anticipates financial challenges ahead, including potential declines in state aid, flat local revenues, and uncertainty about possible state tax changes.

The district does not plan to pursue an operating levy increase and will maintain the current tax rate. It is also important to note that the recently approved $3 million bond is restricted to capital improvements and cannot be used for salaries or daily operations.

Financial projections show a balanced budget next year, followed by planned deficit spending in subsequent years. With a strong reserve balance projected at approximately 60%, well above the Board's 30% minimum, the district is in a stable position to manage these challenges responsibly.

Overall, the focus remains on maintaining financial discipline while continuing to invest in staff and preserving high-quality opportunities for students.

Announcements:

- May BOE Meeting: Monday, May 18, at 6pm in the Southwest Commons.