

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE USD 297 BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 8, 2026 | District Board Office | 7:00 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Board President Troy Hilt called the Regular Meeting of the USD 297 Board of Education to order at 7:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

- **Members Present:** Shawna Blanka, Chris Hingst, Blake Krien, Brooke Lohr, Traci Neitzel, and ShayLinn Zwegardt.
- **Administration Present:** Superintendent Mark Penka, High School Principal Delbert Schmidt, Grade School Principal Susan Dinkel, and Board Clerk Jackie Butler.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board reviewed the agenda for the October 8, 2026, regular meeting. The administration recommended no changes.

- **Action:** Motion by Shawna Blanka, seconded by Chris Hingst, to approve the agenda as presented.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 7 | Negative: 0. Motion Carried.

2. AUDIENCES / PUBLIC COMMENT

No audience members were present, and no public comments were made.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

The Board considered the Consent Calendar items, including the regular meeting minutes from September 10, 2026; the special meeting minutes from September 25, 2026; the distributed list of bills; the Cash Summary Report; and a \$1,000 gift from the Booster Club.

- **Action:** Motion by Chris Hingst, seconded by Blake Krien, to approve the Consent Calendar as presented.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 7 | Negative: 0. Motion Carried.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports were presented.

5. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was brought before the Board.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Official Enrollment & KSHSAA Classifications

Administration presented the official September 22, 2026, enrollment numbers, which show 265 students. The KSHSAA activity classification for the 2026–2027 school year is confirmed as 1A.

Administration presented this item for information; fielded questions about the data, and no official action was taken.

b. KASB Delegate Selection

The board discussed the upcoming KASB Delegate Assembly in Wichita on November 6–8. The consensus of the board was to appoint Traci Neitzel to serve as the official KASB Delegate.

c. Contracts Returned for Signature

The Board reviewed incoming employment contracts. The district had one contract returned for signature. No official action was taken.

d. Bank Account Signature Cards

Following prior approval of Jackie Butler as Cash Management Administrator, the Board reviewed updated signature cards for The Bank, Western State Bank, and First National Bank (FNB). The updated cards add Jackie Butler, effective October 8, 2026, alongside remaining signatories Jaydenn Porubsky, Troy Hilt, and Marilyn Raile.

- **Action:** Motion by ShayLinn Zwegardt, seconded by Blake Krien, to approve the new bank signature cards adding Jackie Butler.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 7 | Negative: 0. Motion Carried.

e. Insurance & Personnel Discussion

The Board discussed employee health benefits, specifically reviewing Blue Cross/Blue Shield Dental insurance options. The Board agreed to decline the Blue Cross/Blue Shield dental plan and remain with Delta Dental insurance.

After reviewing the policy, the Board introduced a motion to adjust district health insurance contributions.

- **Action:** Motion by Traci Neitzel, seconded by Shawna Blanka, to increase district insurance contributions for qualifying individuals to \$500 per month for individual coverage and \$1,000 per month for family coverage. Additionally, the district will provide a \$500 monthly payment to individuals who qualify for district insurance but opt out of coverage; this payment will terminate once the individual enrolls in or accepts Medicare coverage.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 6 | Negative: 1. Motion Carried.

f. Personnel Compensation

The Board reviewed the compensation adjustments for Tammy Grice.

- **Action:** Motion by Shawna Blanka, seconded by Chris Hingst, to approve a stipend for Tammy Grice for serving as both the elementary and secondary special education (SPED) teacher.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 7 | Negative: 0. Motion Carried.

g. Personnel - 2026-2027 Needs Assessment

The Board discussed the district personnel needs assessment. The Board took no official action and tabled the item until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

h. Educational Fund

The Board discussed allocating the remaining \$3,826 balance in the Educational Fund before the December 31st deadline. The Board discussed the balance, but no one introduced a formal motion. The Board agreed to ensure all district teachers are aware of the fund's availability.

7. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- **a. By Administration:** Superintendent Mark Penka extended an official thank you to Callicrate Beef and Pork for their generous donation to the district. No additional administrative operational updates were provided.
- **b. By Board:** No general comments or updates were shared by individual Board members or building Principals.

8. ADJOURNMENT

- **Action:** Motion by Chris Hingst, seconded by Blake Krien, to adjourn the meeting.
- **Vote:** Affirmative: 7 | Negative: 0. Motion Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: November 12, 2026, at 7:00 a.m.