Minutes

Regular Board of Education Meeting
Unified School District No. 473, Chapman, KS

May 11, 2026

Brenda Edleston, School Board President, called the Regular Meeting of the USD 473 Board of Education to order at 6:30 pm at the Education Center located at 822 N. Marshall, Chapman, KS.

Other Board Members Present: Adam Elliott, Jennifer Elliott, Jessica Murphy, Dana Obermeyer and Kyrsten Day
(Favio Garcia was absent)

Also Present: Kevin Suther – Superintendent, Michele Sutter - Board Clerk Kara Wilkins, Kate Thornton, Laurie Rutherford, Clint Merritt, Sheldon Jones, Afton Diehl, Ashley Stearns and Mary Wright

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Jennifer Elliott made the motion to adopt the Agenda. Kyrsten Day seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

Jessica Murphy made the motion to approve the items under the Consent Agenda as presented. Dana Obermeyer seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- **Approve the minutes from the Regular April 13th, 2026 BOE Meeting**
- **Financial Reports: Treasurer, Food Service & Petty Cash**
- **Payment of Bills**
- **Public Participation**

NEW BUSINESS:

Insurance Renewal:

Sheldon Jones from Copeland Insurance was here to discuss the USD 473 insurance renewal. The property insurance deductibles remain the same, depending on the size of the building, range from $25,000 to $75,000. This is good news that none of them are based on a percentage. The property coverage price on replacement went up $4,905,993, which caused the premium to raise $44,673. The total EMC package includes auto, crime, linebacker, general liability, and commercial property, which is an increase of 13.5%, totaling $57,879.

The workers' comp went up much larger for next year because of some larger

claims made this last year, which changed the MOD calculation from a .65 to .87. USD 473 is still under the average that currently is 1.0. This will increase premiums by an additional $10,829, which calculates at around 33% more.

The request is for Sheldon to check with the adjuster again about why some of the buildings, like Chapman High School, went up in evaluation by close to 1.4 million, and CMS by 1.2 million.

Superintendent Suther took another look at the Inland Marine Policy, and some of the equipment is out of date, and the district no longer possesses the equipment, or it is not worth insuring.

The Board of Education would like to have Sheldon work with EMC on the evaluations and premium adjustments to see if they can be reduced. The June board meeting isn't until the 22nd, so the Board has some time to get some answers and hopefully make some adjustments to lower the cost.

Sheldon said he would encourage us to take advantage of the FREE training they offer in Workers' Comp matters. The premiums took a 33% increase due to a couple of high cases this year, but there was no pattern of injury that could be focused on. The district is looking into having the custodians do quarterly training, and the bus drivers already meet monthly throughout the year.

The renewal did not have to be decided at this meeting, and Superintendent Suther was very grateful that Sheldon could get us the information as soon as he did. Brenda Edleston thinks we should table this item until the June meeting. Sheldon agreed that we should wait until we can get more things cleared up and definite. Mr. Suther stated that the continued increase over the last two years is a concern and the district will need to look at all options leading into next year's renewal for insurance coverage.

Brenda made the motion to table the decision on insurance until the June 22nd meeting. Kyrsten Day seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

<u>Opaa! 2026-27 Fixed Food Costs:</u>

This is an action item only to sign and approve the "Addendum to Renew Fixed Price Food Service Management Contract". These amounts approved are what USD 473 will owe for meals to OPAA. The increase ranged from 7 to 13 cents for breakfast and lunch. The Board will discuss meal prices for elementary, middle school, and high school at the July meeting for the 2026-27 school year, which will require a minimum increase of 10 cents. Food prices continue to increase, and more money is needed to be transferred into the food service account over the last couple of years.

Jessica Murphy made the motion to just approve the contract at this point. Adam Elliott seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

AI Policy:

The policy involving AI was pulled out earlier in the semester from the list of updated policies by KASB. After meeting with the administrators and utilizing In-Service time for some training around the topic of AI, we are in a better position to monitor and give advice on what staff and students should use. The policy helps to cover the district and make sure staff know what they should or should not enter into an AI generator, like leaving out names and any other personal information.

We have gone over this policy with our Site Councils and District Level Team. We also brought in the Greenbush Service Center for their assistance to expose and train with our teachers on AI. Mr. Suther said administrators feel that at this time, we should approve the policy and move forward.

Kate Thornton thinks it's important to educate our students on what is expected. Their plan next year is to put a scale in each room showing what they can use AI for. It is very important to educate students on this before going on to college. It is also important to work with students, depending on the assignment, on whether AI should or should not be a tool to use, and why. A good example involved one of the school business programs, Irish Ink.

Jennifer Elliott made the motion to approve Policy IIBE - Use of Artificial Intelligence Policy, which was recommended by KASB. Dana Obermeyer seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

Donations:

The Chapman Middle School project, Honoring Heroes: 250 Years of American Courage, has been selected as a grant recipient. The award amount was $1500.

The Middle School also received a $100 donation to go toward the Mr. Wizard event from Julie Anguiano.

Finally, there was an Astra Bank donation given to USD 473 for $1038.93 for the Irish School Debit Card Program.

Jessica Murphy made the motion to accept all the donations as presented. Kyrsten Day seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

USD 473 Building Needs Assessments:

Before approving the 2026-27 budget in August, the Board started its annual review of each individual building's needs assessment in order to determine how to best distribute funds for the success of the school district. These needs assessments will be available on the District website and the administrative office. This is a required annual assessment and is used to help with making decisions involving areas like staffing, facilities, and curriculum.

Some examples Mr. Suther mentioned involved increasing Central Kansas Mental Health services at Blue Ridge as part of the MHIT grant, which did not require any extra money. At Enterprise Elementary, there is now a full-day position by adding a 1/2 day MTSS responsibility to the 1/2 day PE instructor. This was made possible by reducing an aide position that performed the same job. With reduced enrollment numbers, Chapman Elementary has been reduced to only one class level that has three teachers. For the upcoming school year, the three teachers will be at the 4th-grade level. By getting feedback from staff, a facility decision at the CES Wee Lads & Lasses was made to change half of the room from carpet to tile. The program started using a family-style breakfast and lunch, which naturally creates spills. They also have water/sand/rice stations and would be better served on tile vs. carpet. Chapman Middle School's bell system will need to be accessed with some problems occurring as technology wears out at some point. The Board has discussed gradually adding more cameras on buses to help with issues that arise and safety with a moving vehicle. As enrollment numbers consistently drop, the district will always need to consider when staff leave if the position can be changed or reduced. The facilities assessment that will be completed by the Fall of 2026 will help to build a 5-year plan of priorities for capital outlay on needs for the budget in the future.

Mr. Suther told the Board this is a lot of information and asked them to please review it all as the district leads into approving the 2026-27 budget in August or September.

Personnel:

There were no personnel items.

Legislative Law Updates & Policy Development:

Mr. Suther led with a PowerPoint going over several new educational legislative changes.

SB244 -

The bill requires people in public buildings to use bathrooms, locker rooms, and other "multiple-occupancy private spaces" that correspond to their biological sex at birth. The bill also set penalties for violators ranging from warnings to fines and misdemeanor charges for repeated infractions.

HB2485 -

This bill has the contents of several bills included. The Blueprint for Literacy is included, plus expanding the reporting requirements of the "Every Child Can Read Act". This will include the tracking of two at-risk cohort groups for four years, with one that must start at the 3rd grade, with data involving growth by utilizing research-based interventions.

HB2534 -

This bill requires school districts to provide fentanyl abuse education, districts to maintain naloxone in all schools, and requires the state department to develop guidelines for active shooter drills.

HB2299 -

The "Cell Phone Bill" is probably the most talked-about bill this session.

It will take effect July 1st, and we will need to submit the policy to KSDE by September 1st.

It requires that all personal electronic communication devices be turned off and securely stored away from the student's person in an inaccessible location during the school day.

Students can store phones in vehicles, which can be used during open lunch for seniors or going to an internship, VoTech, etc...

A student may need a phone if a licensed physician deems it a medical necessity to support the health or well-being of the student (Example 504 Plan for diabetes monitoring)

The devices included are a mobile or cellular phone, tablet, non-school-owned computer, watch, wireless headphones or earbuds, text messaging device, or personal digital assistant.

"School day" means the time from the start of school until dismissal at the end of the day on the school premises, including, but not limited to, the time in any classroom, structured or unstructured learning setting, recess, lunch, or passing period.

The other part of the cell phone policy is how staff communicate with students, which is not allowed by social media platforms unless approved by the district. One-way communication for announcements is allowed once approved, like School Messenger, which is currently being used for snow days, grade cards, etc.... The following stipulations must be met:

- **Is owned, licensed, or contractually controlled by the school district or nonpublic school; (ii) allows for required user accounts;**
- **allows communications to be monitored, archived, retained, or audited in compliance with policy or law;**
- **is accessible to parents or guardians; and used by employees in accordance with policy;**
- **email is allowed**

- direct messaging services that only share messages between a sender and a named recipient and do not display or post messages publicly or to users not identified as recipients by the sender of the message;

USD 473 has a contract with Powerschool, which is the School Messenger program, and currently uses Sports You. The Sports You platform is well-received and can continue as a platform if we wish, with teachers and parents. Educational platforms are not part of the bill and will continue for academics like Google Classroom, Drive, and others. The use of social media like Facebook, Instagram, and others can not be used to communicate directly back with any comments to students, so an assessment will need to take place on having comments or not as an option.

Mrs. Thornton brought in a case that CHS and CMS could use to hold the phones in the school offices. There are small individual clear lockers that can hold items like a phone, smartwatch, and earbuds. If a student brings larger headphones, those will have to be checked in with the office staff. The lockers would give students freedom to keep their own key, while the office has the other key in case one is lost. Before and after school procedures will be worked on by the administrators. The elementary can have a locked case in the office with the secretary putting each phone into a slot to be held until the end of the day. Each storage unit could hold up to 30 to 60 phones. Elementary students will be encouraged to keep their phones at home, but know that if there is something after school, they may need to bring their phone that day.

There were attachments provided that include ideas for a communication plan to families and a form to add to the online enrollment to not only explain the policy but also ask how the student will store their phone, which could be at home, in their car, or in the storage locker in the office. Another requirement of the bill is to have a disciplinary plan, for which there will be no warning given. Step 1 - The device will be taken, and the parent/ guardian will need to pick it up. There are additional steps involving a meeting, detention, ISS, etc...

Mr. Suther stated that staff members are not included in the policy for not having a phone. We will encourage them not to be on it unless during their plan. If there is some type of emergency or need, they will have access to the phone in the room, the intercom, and the teacher's cell phone. Part of the communication plan is steps for the office on getting messages to students during passing period or lunch, while calling them in to the office directly if needed for immediate needs by the parent or guardian.

Adjournment:

Jessica Murphy made the motion to adjourn. Kyrsten Day

seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm

, vice president

Brenda Edleston, Board President

Michele Sutter, Board Clerk