

Commentary

USD 435 District update

By Greg Brown
Superintendent

The following is a brief report about the April 14, 2025 Regular Board of Education Meeting.

Personnel Update: We want to wish Mr. Travis Evans well as he is stepping away from the building trades teaching position he has held for the past four years. We also want to thank Mr. Mike Fulton for his work as a AHS night custodian position, as he will be pursuing other work.

Other classified and supplemental positions were approved.

Ms. Mackenzie Funston will be an assistant 8th girls’ basketball coach next year as Ms. Megan Berry will move into the head position for this team. Mrs. Tyler Kauer will transfer from 3rd grade to 4th grade as a teacher, Miss Alice Bathurst will complete her student teaching for one of our 1st grade classrooms and Ms. Geraldine Bucher will transfer from her Title Aide position to a full-time substitute teacher at McKinley.

Mrs. Julie Weishaar, Mr. Dallas Meneley and Mrs. Jennifer Andres were all approved to teach AHS Summer School.

- Site Council Minutes from AHS and AMS were accepted.

Tuancy Review
Team: Mr. Ben Ines shared how the district’s newly formed Tuancy Review

Team is collaborating with families to reduce truancy concerns.

Donations: The Board of Education approved the following gifts:

- The Abilene After School Program received a \$5,000 grant from the James and Cheryl Jordan Community Strings Program funding through the Community Foundation of Dickinson County.
- Kennedy, McKinley, and Eisenhower received a \$10,000 grant from Jeffcoat Foundation and Mr. Hank Royer for their behavior stores.
- Science Summer Academy received \$10,000 from the Jeffcoat Foundation and Mr. Hank Royer.
- AHS Wrestling received a donation of \$2081 from Curtis and Sandy Rein for the section of competition mat that will says “Cowgirls” to offset the existing section saying “Cowboys”.
- AHS FFA received a donation of \$500 from Horizon Farm and Ranch Realty.

JAG-K (Jobs for America’s Graduates-Kansas): Dr. Randy Randolph, Sr. Director of Program Management for JAG-K presented some details about how the JAG-K program could serve the students of Abilene High School. The Board of Education approved the establishment of a JAG-K program to begin this coming fall for the 2025-2026 school year.

District Health Insurance: The Board of Education

reviewed bid information from four companies who are in a position to provide group health insurance for the district’s employees. The bid from Blue Cross and Blue Shield was approved. The health insurance plan will renew on July 1st.

Out of State Travel: The Board of Education approved the Abilene Athletics Leadership Council taking a trip to Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri on May 5th. Mr. Derek Berns and Mr. Shawn Herrman are the advisors for the council.

2025-2026 KASB Membership Renewal: The BOE approved renewing their membership to the Kansas Association of School Boards including access to legal services.

Student Handbooks: The proposed 25-26 student handbooks, the 25-26 Abilene Athletics and Activities Handbook, and the 25-26 Abilene Coaches Handbook were received by the Board of Education as a first read.

After taking the next month to review the material, the BOE will consider approving the material at the May Board meeting.

Food Management RFP: The district is currently in the process of receiving bids from Food Service Management Companies. Review of the proposals will be completed between April 25th and May 1st. Megan Armstrong volunteered to be a part of the review team.

Professional Development:

An updated five year professional development plan was reviewed by the Board and approved.

Threat Assessment Protocol: The Board reviewed the protocols followed by administrators when they deal with threatening behaviors in the schools.

Board-Administrator Communication: The monthly reports from each of the administrators were received and available to the public on the website.

Staff Appreciation: Teacher Appreciation Week is May 5-9. Plans are being made to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week and thank our staff. A special lunch is planned for Thursday, May 8th. The Board of Education members are encouraged to join the staff at one of our five school buildings for lunch on May 8th.

Retirement Reception: Mrs. Dana Sprinkle shared plans for a retirement reception for Greg Brown on Friday, May 16th from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in the District Office building.

Executive Sessions: Three separate executive sessions were conducted at the end of the Board meeting.

One pertaining to personnel, the second pertaining to school safety and the third pertaining to negotiations. After the personnel executive session the BOE approved providing an additional 7.5 days of sick leave from the district’s sick leave pool for an employee.

Local students receive K-State legacy scholarships

MANHATTAN — Three Dickinson County students are among 150 students who received \$2,000 legacy scholarships awarded to children and grandchildren of K-State alumni for the 2025-26 academic year.

K-State students receiving the scholarships are incoming freshmen as well as incoming transfer students. The recipients include both in-state students and out-of-state students. The K-State Legacy Scholarship is awarded based on legacy status, grade point average and financial need. Students qualify as a legacy if their parents or grandparents graduated from K-State.

The area students awarded legacy scholarships are Landon Bathurst and Leighton Bathurst of Abilene; and Madisyn Sly, Herington;

“This scholarship is a point of pride for our Alumni Association in many ways. It provides students an opportunity to attend K-State, while continuing their family connection to the university,” said Adam Walker, president and CEO of the Alumni Association.

“It is supported by loyal K-Staters who are paving the way for the next generation of K-Staters. It’s an investment in the future for both our students and our university.”

The scholarships are made possible through funds generated by the K-State License Plate program, administered by the Alumni Association for the university.

The state-issued license plates with the purple Powercat logo can be found on the back of more than 15,000 vehicles in four states: Kansas, Maryland, Oklahoma and Texas.

The program began in 1996, and the tax-deductible royalties paid on K-State License Plates have raised more than \$7 million for student recognition and scholarships.

Chapman student named to Silver Key Sophomore Honorary

MANHATTAN — Kansas State University’s Silver Key Sophomore Honorary, a leadership honor society emphasizing community service, has selected 41 new members for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Among the new members is Tucker Seibert, a major in animal sciences and industry, from Chapman.

To be eligible for Silver Key, students must have at least a 3.0 grade point average, be a 2025 high school graduate and be in their freshman year at the university.

Silver Key members participate in various community service projects throughout the semester. Past projects have included hosting children from the Boys and Girls Club at K-State Athletics events; partnering with the K-State Recycling Center; writing cards and making quilts for a local veterans’ center; collecting donations for the Manhattan Emergency Shelter; cleaning up highways and neighborhoods; and visiting the Stoneybrook and Meadowlark senior living communities in Manhattan.

The Abilene Reflector-Chronicle welcomes story ideas and news submissions. To make a story suggestion call the Reflector at (785) 263-1000 or send an email to editor@abilene-rc.com

The Reflector also welcomes news about class and family reunions, meeting write-ups, upcoming meetings and other events.

Chapman, Herington schools compete in Kansas National Archery program tourney

PRATT – Nearly 400 student archers from across Kansas competed for top honors at the 2024 Kansas National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) State Tournaments, held March 28–29 at the Kansas State Fairgrounds in Hutchinson.

Students participated in bullseye and 3D archery events, vying for individual and team awards—and the chance to qualify for NASP Nationals.

Archery students from Herington and Chapman high and middle schools competed.

“This tournament was a great success for our kids,” said Neal Cruse, head coach

at USD 504 in Parsons. “The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks does a great job of hosting this event. We are extremely appreciative of the work they put in for our archers.”

A record-setting \$20,000 in scholarships was awarded to outstanding student archers at this year’s tournaments.

The tournaments were organized and hosted by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), with help from staff across seven divisions and sections, many of whom volunteered their time to support the students.

“What stood out the most was the incredible representation from across the agency,” said Lyndzee Rhine,

KDWP outdoor skills coordinator. “Pulling off a large event is one thing, but feeling the support and unity from every corner of KDWP made it truly special.”

“This tournament doesn’t just happen. It takes people, dedication, and partnerships built on trust and a shared mission,” Rhine added. “We’re beyond grateful to everyone who made it happen. Your hard work mattered, and it made a difference.”

NASP tournaments include divisions for elementary (grades 4–5), middle school (grades 6–8), and high school (grades 9–12). Students may compete in the bullseye and 3D tournaments, each

designed to test different archery skills.

Local results:

Bullseye Middle School
2nd: Chapman – 2,820

3D High School
2nd: Chapman – 1,580
7th: Herington – 1,502

3D Middle School
2nd: Herington – 1,551
3rd: Chapman – 1,481

To view full tournament scores, including individual placements, visit nasptournaments.org.

More information on the NASP program in Kansas and how to get involved can be found here or by contacting Lyndzee Rhine at Lyndzee.Rhine@ks.gov or 785-260-3033.



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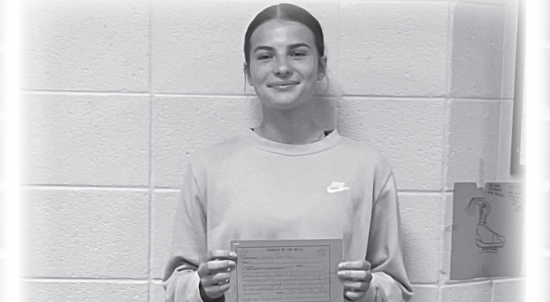


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ac westside MARKET



Lucy Barten

Student’s Name: Lucy Barten
Parents: Da’Lean and Casey Barten
Grade: 8th grade
Nominated by: 8th Grade Team
Nickname: Luce
Achievements: 3 time gold card recipient, Abilene Athletics Leadership Club.
School Activities: Volleyball, Track, Cheer
Activities Outside of School: Volleyball Camps
Favorite Class: Science and Communications
Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Millican
Plans for Future: Physical Therapist
What she enjoys about school: Seeing her friends
Someone she looks up to: Parents and Friends
Comments from nomination teacher:
Every day, Lucy Barten is a standout scholar and athlete at Abilene Middle School, but this Student of the Week award honors her willingness to help when needed. When an 8th grade teacher asked Lucy to help the substitute during an absence, Lucy didn’t hesitate—she started the video lesson and helped keep things rolling smoothly. It might seem like a small thing, but Lucy’s willingness to help shows responsibility and initiative—qualities we love to see in our AMS students.

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SAT: 9 A.M. – 1 P.M.
SUN: CLOSED