



Football rankings

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Herington 101. KSHSAA's 8-Player Division I currently includes schools with classification enrollments from 70 to 104.
Although Chase County competes with Council Grove and other area schools in the Flint Hills League, football classifications are handled separately. Council Grove plays 11-player football in Class 2A, while Chase County and Herington compete in 8-Player Division I. That means Council Grove fields 11 players at a time in football, while Chase County and Herington field eight. The schools can remain league opponents in other sports without playing one another in football.

School Board

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an incentive that allowed students to earn the opportunity to wear hats beginning in the second trimester if the school improved its attendance performance. He said the incentive will be used again this school year. Gehrer and Doornbos noted that absences include illness as well as family trips and other reasons students miss school.
The board also reviewed building needs assessments and state assessment information in preparation for its September budget discussions. Eslinger said the review is required and is intended to help the board connect identified academic and building needs with budget decisions. The information will return to the board in September. Discussion also included staffing and student needs within the special education cooperative and plans for the cooperative's director to attend district meetings periodically to provide information and answer questions.
The board reviewed proposed language concerning JHC, the district's student organizations policy. Eslinger said the board had requested options during its previous meeting. He will gather additional feedback from Doornbos and Activities Director Matt Fox before bringing possible policy language back to the board. No action was taken.
Under action items, the board approved a revision to its BK Board Self-Evaluation policy. The revised language provides that evaluations will be completed electronically by individual board members, with the results discussed in person during scheduled board meetings.

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The board also renewed the Building Blocks Community Childcare lease without changes and appointed Travis Schweger as USD 417's voting delegate for the 2026 Kansas Association of School Boards Delegate Assembly.

The board entered executive session under the nonelected personnel exception to discuss an individual employee's performance with Eslinger present. Following the personnel executive sessions, the board returned to open session and approved its employment matters.

Approved for employment were Amanda McDonald, CGJSHS behavior/concessions aide; Jaedyn Miller, substitute teacher; Andrea Messer, mental health school liaison; Bryan Ng, substitute teacher; Jayc True, junior high assistant girls basketball coach; Karla McNeese, CGES cook; Nate Watts, substitute teacher; David Kinley, substitute teacher; Leanne Williams and Kierra Elstun, CGES teacher aide/interventionists; Sheila Hill, regular-route bus driver; and Taylor Johnson, assistant high school volleyball coach.

The board also approved the transfers of Benjamin Jarchow to junior high head girls basketball coach and Samantha Davis to head musical. Resignations were accepted from Jaedyn Miller as CGJSHS behavior/concessions aide and Dallas Burton as assistant high school volleyball coach.

A transition morning for seventh-graders, ninth-graders and students new to the junior-senior high school is scheduled Aug. 19, with the school year beginning Aug. 20.

A board work study is planned for Aug. 25, with the location to be determined. A special meeting will also be scheduled to address negotiations and the high school schedule.

On Sept. 14, the district will hold its budget hearing at 5:45 p.m., Revenue Neutral Rate hearing at 5:50 p.m. and regular Board of Education meeting at 6 p.m.

During Good News by Board of Education members, board members recognized the participation

Council Grove Junior Senior High School finished at 13.8 percent. Principal Jay Doornbos discussed an incentive that allowed students to earn the opportunity to wear hats beginning in the second trimester if the school improved its attendance performance. He said the incentive will be used again this school year. Gehrer and Doornbos noted that absences include illness as well as family trips and other reasons students miss school.

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During Good News by Board of Education members, board members recognized the participation and work of the Council Grove Elementary School PTO, community support and donations for students, enthusiasm surrounding the beginning of the school year, and the work of maintenance employees, administrators and district office staff in preparing district facilities and programs for students.

EMAIL YOUR NEWS TO
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Stories & Songs of the Flint Hills

by Annie Wilson – named the “Flint Hills Balladeer” by the Kansas Governor

Tallgrass Beef – Early Niche Marketing

Ranchers in the 1990's were struggling with low beef prices. After high costs, many producers were barely breaking even with prices for fed steers at \$70 cwt (now around \$235 cwt).

So in 1995, a group of Flint Hills ranchers decided to try specialized or “niche” marketing: to direct market cattle and eliminate the middleman. Our “niche” would be to bring back the grass-finishing production model of the early Flint Hills era, when cattle were sent to market directly off the rich tallgrass prairie pastures, instead of going to feedlots.

Ten ranch families, including my husband John and me, along with Jim, Cathy, Josh and Gwen Hoy, and others, formed the Tallgrass Prairie Producers Co-op. I became the Business Manager. We all studied and learned everything we could about what turned out to be an incredibly complex and highly monopolized industry.

We passionately believed in our “Tallgrass Beef,” lower in fat content with obvious health

advantages, including beneficial Omega-3 fatty acids. We were also proud that our cattle were never confined in feedlots and lived their lives “free range” on beautiful Flint Hills pastures.

We did nutritional testing at K-State, finding several cuts with fat content comparable to skinless chicken breast – making our beef an appealing, low-fat dietary option. Notably, in our taste-testing, most people also found it to have a more flavorful, superior taste.

We hired a top graphic designer who created our logo and marketing materials. We wore our western gear and traveled to food events to give talks and set up booths to serve our beef. We even went to a huge natural foods trade show in Baltimore, Maryland which opened up new markets for us.

However, it turned out, we were simply before our time. To our knowledge, we were the first USDA-labeled “Grassfed” beef in U.S.

In fact, when I called the USDA in 1995 to register our label claims,



the lady asked me: “What is ‘grassfed’?” We helped the USDA define the protocol. Now thirty years later, grassfed beef is a well-recognized, popular product. But back then, we had an uphill battle trying to educate people in what grassfed beef even is.

We worked for five years (1995-99) to market our beef and eventually distributed it in 23 states. Nevertheless, encountering insurmountable barriers, we became exhausted and decided to sell the business. Our buyer was Bill Kurtis, the American journalist and owner of Red Buffalo Ranch, Sedan.

To share with others what we wished someone had told us, I wrote an article that became widely published in ag circles: “Romance vs. Reality: Hard Lessons Learned in a Grassfed Beef Marketing Cooperative.”

Despite all the challenges, we are proud to have been trailblazers in this important niche market.

See more stories & songs of the Flint Hills at tallgrassexpress.com

FH Ranch Rodeo

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Lewis at 620-220-1618.

Admission for spectators is \$5 for adults, while children age 8 and younger will be admitted free.

The Flint Hills Annual Ranch Rodeo offers spectators an opportunity to watch teams demonstrate the cattle-handling skills used in everyday ranch work while competing against other crews from the area.

No beer will be sold at the event. Outside coolers are welcome, but glass bottles are not permitted.

The rodeo will be held in Strong City.

God's Kids

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an opportunity to enroll students on Tuesday, August 18th, between 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the United Methodist Church. Parents are encouraged to enroll their children prior to attending so there are adequate supplies and snacks available. Children may be enrolled throughout the school year.

Drivers reminded of new cellphone law in Kansas school zones

TOPEKA (WIBW) - With classes starting this week across the Sunflower State, drivers may want to remember a new law regarding cellphone usage in Kansas school zones.

The American Automobile Association on Monday reminded motorists to be aware of the new law that makes it unlawful to hold a cellphone while driving through school zones during posted, active hours.

“Whether it is parents picking up or dropping off their children, high school students driving to and from school or anyone simply driving through, it’s important to know that school zones are now no-phone zones, at least using them in handheld mode while driving,” said Shawn Steward, Public and Government Affairs Manager for AAA Club Alliance in Kansas.

The handheld cell phone ban is in effect specifically during the hours before and after school, during posted school zone hours or when school zone lights are flashing.

Drivers may still use their wireless communications device in a hands-free mode, such as speaker-phone,

with a hands-free device, or via Bluetooth hands-free mode through their vehicle entertainment system.

“The goal with the new law is to protect our children on their way to and from school,” Steward said. “Kids are particularly vulnerable around school zone traffic, especially with drivers distracted by their phones. Hopefully, this will keep drivers focused on the road and navigating congested school zones safely.”

The bill including this new school zone handheld phone ban was originally introduced by AAA Kansas.

With support from law enforcement, transportation authorities, school and children’s advocacy groups, and other traffic safety advocates, the bill -- Senate Bill 366 -- passed the Kansas legislature in

March 2026 and was signed into law by Gov. Laura Kelly.

The new school zone handheld phone ban includes a one-year grace period for law enforcement to focus on public education and warnings.

Beginning July 1, 2027, traffic citations may be written and include a \$60 fine, AAA says.



Council Grove Republican Letters to the Editor Policy

The Council Grove Republican welcomes letters addressing issues of public interest. Letters provide readers with an opportunity to express opinions, offer information and participate in civil community discussions.

The following guidelines apply:

Letters must not exceed 300 words. Letters exceeding the limit will be returned to the writer for revision or may be edited for length.

A person may have no more than one letter published within a seven-day period.

Writers are limited to one letter on the same subject, proposal, candidate, ballot question or public controversy during the period in which that matter is being actively debated. A letter may respond to an opinion previously published, but the newspaper will not publish continuing exchanges between the same writers. Once a writer has addressed a particular issue, additional responses from that writer on the same issue generally will not be published.

Letters must be directed to the newspaper's readers and discuss the issue involved. Letters written primarily to confront, criticize or carry on a personal exchange with another letter writer will not be published.

Letters must address one primary subject and should concern matters of public or community interest.

Letters may disagree strongly with public policies, decisions and opinions. However, they may not contain personal attacks, name-calling, threats, discriminatory language, profanity or statements that are potentially libelous or defamatory.

Factual allegations must be capable of verification. Writers may be asked to provide documentation supporting disputed or consequential claims. Opinions should be clearly presented as opinions.

Letters submitted as part of an organized campaign, including identical or substantially similar form letters, may be declined. Writers should disclose any relevant personal, professional, financial or organizational interest in the subject.

Letters submitted on behalf of an organization, committee, campaign, association or other group must identify every person who participated in preparing, approving or endorsing the letter. A general signature such as “members of the committee” or the name of an organization alone will not be accepted. Each person whose name appears on the letter must consent to its submission, and the newspaper may verify that consent before publication.

Each letter must include the writer's full name, community of residence, mailing address and telephone number. The address and telephone number are required for verification and will not be published. Anonymous letters and letters submitted under assumed names will not be accepted.

Letters must be the writer's own work. By submitting a letter, the writer accepts responsibility for its accuracy and content.

The Council Grove Republican reserves the right to edit letters for length, spelling, grammar, punctuation, clarity and newspaper style without changing the writer's intended position. Letters may also be declined because of space limitations, repetition, lack of local relevance, unverifiable claims or failure to comply with this policy.

Publication is at the discretion of the editor. Submission of a letter does not guarantee publication.

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Win a FREE Family Pack for 4 to the Kansas State Fair

September 11 - September 20

Package valued at \$184 includes:

- 4 Gate Admission Tickets • \$20 in Food Tickets
- 2 Midway FunTagg Cards (for carnival rides)
- 2 Five-Ride Pass Cards (valid for one ride each per card on select classic attractions: State Fair Railroad, Ye Old Mill, the Giant Slide, and the Sky Ride)

Enter by Wednesday, September 3. Drawing for family packs to occur on Thursday, September 4.



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