

Herald-Chronicle



Dan Rukes/Herald-Chronicle

The Scranton Attendance Center will close its doors.

Santa Fe Trail USD 434

Board votes to close Scranton Attendance Center

Gary Rush | Reporter

SCRANTON — Board members Amy Huizenga, Justin Ramsdale, Kylie Hastings, Michelle Schmale and Jamie Sowers were in attendance for the regularly scheduled Santa Fe Trail USD 434 Board of Education meeting, held Feb. 11 in the Scranton Attendance Center (SAC) gym. Board member Stephenie Ganger was available for the session via video link. Board President Tanner Black called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

The meeting immediately initiated discussions concerning district reconfigurations with representatives of HTK Architects. On a diagram offered by the architects, there was no mention of proposed renovations, including the Scranton Attendance Center. It was an informative presentation, and no movement was made in acceptance or denial of the plans submitted by the architect group.

Soon after the architectural discussion, the meeting adjourned for a 20-minute executive session, which included the presence of District Legal Counsel Greg Goheen. A 17-minute extension was requested and granted by

unanimous vote. Board members returned to the gym, and Black called the board meeting back into session, with no action taken. An entirely different executive session quickly followed the first round of private meetings, which covered district personnel.

Board member Ramsdale read a prepared motion to close the Scranton Attendance Center. The motion was seconded by Ganger, and passed by unanimous vote. Ramsdale then read a second prepared motion for the board to “approve the disposal of (the) Scranton preschool/district administration center property.” That motion was also seconded and unanimously approved.

The decision of the board members came following a special meeting held just prior to the regularly scheduled meeting, in which multiple public comments were heard concerning the proposed closing of the SAC.

Santa Fe Trail alumnus Aulysa Lester said the SAC would require fewer renovations than other buildings in the district, and asked the school board to reconsider their plan to close the Scranton Attendance Center.

Scranton resident Pat Lira spoke

about the historical happenstance of the SAC and how the community had pulled behind district officials to originally open the facility. “I just learned about this proposed closing of the attendance center a few days ago, as I do not follow the workings of the district online,” Lira said. “It is my wish that you would reconsider supporting the commitment your predecessors made to this community when they built this facility.” She went on to suggest that the board consider making Scranton the facility for preschool through second-graders. “I do not want to see any of our schools closed, but if we must have one closed, I would suggest the Overbrook facility, as it is the oldest and makes more sense, at least to me, when considering bussing and other student travel issues,” Lira continued. “I would suggest retaining the resources that you have. If you were to make this your goal and let people know of your intentions, you will get the support you seek.”

Libby Thompson addressed the board next. “I want to start with letting you know that I am an

See USD 434 | 11

Osage County Commission

Commission addresses personnel changes, energy policy, fence dispute

LYNDON — The Osage County Commission addressed personnel matters, energy policy discussions, and administrative business during its regular meeting Feb. 10 at the Osage County Courthouse in Lyndon.

Commissioners Les Holman, Brandon Smith and Heather Kuder were present. Also attending were County Clerk Michelle Morris and County Counselor Joshua Ney.

During new business, adjoining landowners requested a formal fence viewing related to a long-standing fence line dispute involving pasture ground. Commissioners, who serve as fence viewers under Kansas law, reviewed the request and discussed statutory requirements governing fence disputes, including responsibilities for construction, maintenance and repair of partition fences.

Ney outlined the legal process, noting that commissioners must physically view the fence before making a written determination assigning responsibility between parties. The commission scheduled a fence viewing for 8:30 a.m.

Feb. 24, with formal notice to be provided to both landowners. Any final determination will be made at a later meeting, following the viewing.

The commission amended the agenda to include personnel matters from the road and bridge department. Commissioners approved the resignation of an employee effective Feb. 6, and approved a status and payroll change for a new full-time employee in the department. Commissioners noted the department had been operating short-handed and that filling the position would assist with upcoming seasonal road work.

Commissioners discussed operations at the county recycling center, including questions about operating hours and staffing. The department reported that hours remain unchanged for now, but future operational changes are being explored to reduce contamination from non-recyclable materials and to improve efficiency. Possible changes include limiting drop-offs to staffed hours and modifying

how materials are accepted and processed.

County Appraiser Carl Miller informed commissioners that the state had approved extensions for the publication of market value information and mailing of 2026 valuation notices. Publication is expected later in February, with valuation notices scheduled to be mailed March 16. The extension was granted as part of statewide timing adjustments affecting multiple counties.

Commissioners discussed proposals from two recruiting firms related to the potential hiring of a county controller, a position authorized under Kansas statute to oversee county financial administration. After reviewing fee structures and service differences, the commission approved a proposal from Bird Dog Recruitment and Consulting, contingent upon legal review of the final contract.

Discussion during the meeting included the potential duties of a controller, including oversight of

See Commission | 7

USD 420

School Board approves calendar, personnel changes

The Osage City Unified School District 420 Board of Education met in regular session at 6 p.m. Feb. 11 in the high school media center.

Board President P.J. Heptinstall called the meeting to order. Board members Alex Carson, Gerad Fagan, Jim Lohmeyer, Corey Linton, Tyler Parsons and Cally Tice were present. Superintendent Ted Hessong and Board Clerk Patty Brenner also attended, along with high school principal Scott Kimble, middle school principal Tim Riemann, and elementary school principal Dena Paul. Staff members Amy Linton, Kathy Reed, Travis Bilyeu, Tabatha Renfro and Laurie Fager were also present.

The board approved the agenda, the minutes of the Jan. 14 regular meeting, and the Jan. 31 treasurer’s report. Members approved payment of \$672,712.47 in bills and \$568,313.75 for the January payroll.

Donations were received from Ray Atchison and the Steve Moulin family for the VoAg/FFA program and from RV Hungry Inc. for the high school choir. The board also approved a \$630 donation from the Osage City Chamber of Commerce to send two high school students to the HOBY Leadership Conference.

Bilyeu and Renfro, members of the high school Guiding Coalition Team, presented information on Professional Learning Communities.

The board approved the superintendent’s recommendation for the 2026-2027 academic calendar, pending negotiations. Members also approved a memorandum of understanding with Greenbush Virtual Academy for grades 9-12.

The board approved a bid from Shawnee Mission Ford for a 10-passenger van in the amount of \$60,233.

Members voted to direct the superintendent to adjust the academic calendar if the high school basketball teams qualify for the state tournament.

Building principals were available to answer questions regarding their respective schools. Hessong provided a monthly update that included information on a KSDE audit, a feasibility study, the Feb. 16 professional development day, and negotiations training for board members.

The board and Hessong entered executive session four times to discuss supplemental and certified positions under the non-elected personnel exception of the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

Following executive session, the board accepted the resignations of Jeff Savage as middle school boys head basketball coach and Lacey Mobbs as high school assistant cheerleading coach. The board also approved the hiring of Melinda Patterson as elementary principal for the 2026-2027 school year.

Burlingame USD 454

Board reviews graduation requirements for seniors

BURLINGAME — The Burlingame USD 454 Board of Education met Feb. 11 for its regularly scheduled meeting. Board members Melissa Droege, Audrey Ross, Chrissie Atchison and Pam Masters were present. Also in attendance were Superintendent Marcy Cassidy, Principals Shelley Banzhaf and Taylor Montgomery, and Board Clerk Christi Droege.

In the communications portion of the meeting, secondary virtual programming was discussed, the KSDE Audit Summary and graduation requirements were reviewed, and event supervision, summer driver’s education program, and school start time for the 2026-2027 school year were discussed.

The board held four executive sessions to discuss individual certi-

fied employee performance pursuant to non-elected personnel exception under KOMA, with Cassidy, Banzhaf and Montgomery.

Montgomery reported on the LCL principal meeting and student-led conferences. Banzhaf reported on attendance, Kansas Day activities, and the upcoming carnival. Cassidy reported on the February Three Lakes Special Education board meeting.

In other action, the board:

☐ Approved the consent agenda, consisting of the Jan. 14 regular board meeting minutes and the activity fund reports.

☐ Approved payment of warrants and treasurer’s report.

☐ Approved version A of the academic calendar for 2026-2027.



INSIDE

BUSINESS DIRECTORY	6	DEATHS	2
CHURCH DIRECTORY/REMEMBER WHEN	5	MDCY QUEEN OF COURTS	8
CLASSIFIEDS	10	OPINION	4
COMMUNITY	3, 6	PUBLIC NOTICES	9

SCHOOL	7
SPORTS	11, 12

INSERTS

MENARDS BOMGAARS