

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**APRIL 29, 2022**  
**5:00 P.M.**

The Board of Education of Unified School District 234, Fort Scott, Kansas, met at their offices at 424 South Main, Fort Scott, Kansas in special session at 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Brian Allen, Kellye Barrows, Gary Billionis, Danny Brown, Lynette Jackson, David Stewart, James Wood

**ALSO PRESENT:** Board Clerk Gina Shelton, Dalaina Smith

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bryce Daly

**OPEN THE MEETING – 5:00 P.M.**

President Wood opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

**FLAG SALUTE**

**KANAWARE GRANT PARTICIPATION**

It was moved by Mr. Stewart, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, and carried by unanimous vote that the board approve the following letter of participation:

# Unified School District 234

424 South Main  
Fort Scott, KS 66701-2697  
[www.usd234.org](http://www.usd234.org)  
620-223-0800 Fax 620-223-2760

**TED HESSONG**  
Superintendent



**Dear Dr. Nelson:**

Fort Scott Unified School District (USD 234) is delighted to provide a letter of support and commitment for the KanAware proposal in response to SAMHSA's Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness And Resiliency in Education) funding opportunity. We are looking forward to collaborating with our strong community partners across our southeast Kansas region to enhance and develop multi-tier sustainable approaches to serve students, families, and communities through awareness, promotion, prevention, and evidence-based interventions.

Our district continues to grow and encompasses four schools serving over 1,800 students. We serve a diverse student population with over half of students designated as economically disadvantaged and eligible to receive free or reduced lunch. The KanAware goals align well with our mission at Fort Scott USD 234 to lead in the success of each student becoming Independent, Responsible, and Productive global citizens. We have community partnerships with local businesses for mentoring as well as health and mental health services to support students across domains. We were proud to recently accept the Copper certificate from the Kansas State Department of Education STAR Awards Program for Graduation Rate in 2021. This designation is a direct result of our passionate and dedicated staff, our vision to provide an exemplary education for all students, our strong relationships with parents and community organizations, the development of a diverse and balanced curriculum, and a safe and inviting climate that encourages learning.

We at USD 234 are excited to serve as a partner in the activities and services provided through this KanAWARE application. USD 234 is located in a medically under-resourced area of Kansas with less access to behavioral health services compared to other areas of the state. Alongside our committed partners of the KanAWARE project, we will work to develop resilient school communities through the expansion of behavioral health in our district. With the support of our community partners, we are looking forward to meeting the individualized needs of our students and staff through behavioral health approaches backed by research.

There is significant need for trauma-informed behavioral health services in our district, as evidenced by a recent needs assessment for Bourbon county, where our district is located, that showed increasing use of alcohol, marijuana, and prescription drug misuse among adolescents compared to statewide numbers and low perceived risk of harm from drug use compared to state levels. For example, 17.2% of youth surveyed reported alcohol use in the past 30 days and 18.9% report vaping, which are almost double and triple the state average respectively. Additionally, there are increasing favorable attitudes toward drug use as well as increasing levels of low perceived risk of harm from drug use among youth in Bourbon county.

The data support a clear need for substance use and behavioral health supports in our district, and yet there is a lower ratio of mental health providers per person in Bourbon county (1450:1) compared to statewide availability (490:1). Together, these findings demonstrate the need for enhanced behavioral supports. This is why we are passionate about working with our KanAWARE partners towards goals related to building infrastructure for targeted behavioral health supports across our region.

These responses indicate the significant level of need for a multi-tiered approach through the KanAWARE project to enhance resilience and healthy coping, while reducing substance use and rates of psychiatric symptoms. Overall, we aim to build healthy, resilient communities with adaptive, multi-tiered approaches to meet diverse student and family needs.

In line with the funding requirements/activities, we commit to the following activities:


1. In partnership with the KanAWARE team, we will contribute to conducting a needs assessment of LEA partners and the southeast Kansas catchment area to further identify the service gaps and extent of the need with current prevalence rates and incidence data. As part of a continuous improvement mindset, our organization has a strong commitment to multi-stakeholder community input guiding our work and priorities. We have extensive experience developing and implementing needs assessment in the region, as well as analyzing results and translating them into action to better serve Kansas' children and their families. We will share design information and data from our recent needs assessments.
2. Within six months of the award, we will contribute to the development of an implementation with the elements below:
  - a. We will assist KanAWARE's refinement of a three-tiered public health model for providing supports to school-aged youth to promote positive behavioral health supports (universal/promotion); targeted services to those who need more support (secondary prevention); and intensive services to those who need them (tertiary intervention). We will contribute to the state education lens to ensure that the three-tiered approach is culturally competent, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based, or evidence-informed, and addresses the effects of COVID-19.
  - b. Develop and implement KanAWARE multi-system referral pathways to ensure that school-aged youth in need of more assistance than brief intervention are referred to and receive necessary school-based and/or community mental health, substance use, and co-occurring supports and services. If necessary, MOUs and other partnership mechanisms shall be established to secure referral pathways.
  - c. Contribute to KanAWARE's workforce capacity-building plan to increase the mental health awareness and literacy of school staff, administrators, parents, and others who interact with school-aged youth to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and link them to appropriate services.
  - d. Contribute to KanAWARE's plan to ensure that the LEAs can respond immediately if a school-aged youth exhibits mental health issues warranting the need for clinical attention.
  - e. Contribute to a description of the school safety and threat/violence prevention plan for each LEA identified in KanAWARE's application.
3. To be completed no later than the end of Year 2, contribute to a KanAWARE sustainability plan that will include, but not be limited to, changes in policy that support the infrastructure to maintain and possibly expand behavioral health services and supports for students when federal funding ends.
4. Support the establishment of a KanAWARE advisory board that includes key stakeholders to support improvement in school-aged youth and family-serving school-based mental health systems, including representatives from the district. The advisory board will include representatives from the LEA, SEA, SMHA, family members, school personnel, and youth. The advisory board will work toward a plan to integrate local, state, and federal funding streams that

support programs with similar goals to ensure the sustainability of effective school-based mental health programs.

5. Support the KanAWARE team in establishing collaborative relationships with families, community groups, and local businesses to broaden and link available community resources to school-aged youth and their families.
6. Support the development of resources and interventions to assist teachers and school personnel to develop skills that promote staff wellness, mental well-being, and resilience to better support and refer school-aged youth with behavioral health issues to needed services.

Given how closely our programs and focus align with the work of KanAWARE, we are eager to collaborate and build on our support for the behavioral health and well-being of our students. Our partner organization, Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas, will take the lead in our involvement and supervision of at least 1.0 FTE dedicated staff member hired by CHC/SEK for the program. Fort Scott Unified School District is excited to continue our innovation in partnership with the KanAWARE program as we continue to develop a school and community that meets the needs of all children and supports them in becoming Independent, Responsible, and Productive global citizens.

Sincerely,

  
James Wood, Board President

## **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

The board discussed the following items in regard to the Superintendent Search:

Timeline – There was discussion of timeline. The interview dates have been adjusted to May 10, 11, and 12, due the last day of school falling on May 13.

Community Interview Host – This will be the person who will chaperone the candidate around town and schools each day. There was discussion in regard to what the host would do and how to select that host. The board chose to have the same community host for each day versus multiple hosts. The person would need to be available and interested. Board members discussed six names for consideration. The list was narrowed down to three names. Names were drawn randomly, and Craig Campbell was selected. There was discussion on how Craig would be contacted.

KASB Exit Survey – There were two options of surveys to receive candidate feedback. The board selected a survey which KASB will provide.

Communication with District – There was discussion on providing opportunities for staff and community to participate. There was a sample message provided to board members to comment and review. The message is to be sent to staff, parents, social media, and then distributed to local sources such as the newspaper and radio. This will be sent out over various mediums, such as email, text, phone message, and social media to communicate equally.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION AND EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

It was moved by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Allen, and carried by unanimous vote that the board does not take action on the executive session or employment matters.

**ADJOURN – 5:31 P.M.**

**ATTEST:**

---

Board President

---

Board Clerk