

Board Briefs

BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS

Education Beyond Expectations

February 6, 2023

Board recognizes Katie Karst and Brandon Hawks

Katie Karst, kindergarten teacher at Overland Trail Elementary, and Brandon Hawks, math teacher at Blue Valley Southwest were selected as Blue Valley's district nominees for Kansas Teacher of the Year. The program, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education, recognizes representatives of excellent teaching in elementary and secondary classrooms across the state.

Board recognizes Jordan Dillon

Jordan Dillon, Latin teacher at Blue Valley High, was selected as a 2023 Kansas Horizon Award winner. The program, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education, recognizes first-year teachers who are representative of excellent teaching in elementary and secondary classrooms across the state. Only 32 teachers across the state are selected as winners.

Board honors Mahshid Hesani and Jessica Oliver

The board recognized Mahshid Hesani, SPED Para 1 at Sunset Ridge Elementary, with the Distinguished Service Award. The Board also honored Jessica Oliver, kindergarten teacher at Lakewood Elementary, with the Excellence in Education Award.

Board hears Chinese Immersion Program evaluation

[Jump straight to this section in the livestream](#)

The board heard from Kelly Ott, executive director of curriculum, instruction and innovation, and Eric Punswick, Chief Human Resources Officer, about the Chinese Immersion Program evaluation. With the conclusion of the 2022 - 2023 school year, the first cohort of Chinese Immersion kindergarten students will advance to middle school. The progression of this complete cohort marked an opportunity for program evaluation aligned with planning for middle school and high school Chinese language instruction opportunities. The program evaluation included review of:

- Program Administration
- Enrollment
- Student Achievement
- Staffing
- Fiscal Demands
- Program delivery models for the elementary, middle, and high school levels

Following the conclusion of the program evaluation report and discussion by board members, Dr. Merrigan announced that the district will form a Chinese Immersion Advisory Task Force.

[For more information on the Chinese Immersion Program please visit the district website.](#)

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Board reviews revised 2024-25 calendar

[Jump straight to this section in the livestream](#)

The board heard from Dr. Collier, deputy superintendent, about the revised 2024-25 school year calendar. [The calendar is available for review on Blue Valley's website.](#)

Comments can be sent via email to bvinfo@bluevalleyk12.org. The board will vote on the 2024-25 calendar at the March meeting.

Board receives legislative update

[Jump straight to this section in the livestream](#)

The Board received an update on the 2023 legislative session including an overview of key dates, the district's priority level positions and testimony submitted by the district for various bills. Patrons can review the district's legislative positions and read the district's testimony on [Blue Valley's legislative web page](#).

A [video recording](#) of the live-streamed meeting is available for viewing on the [Blue Valley Board of Education YouTube channel](#).



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Board Briefs is published by the Blue Valley School District Communications Department following each Board of Education meeting.