BOARD OF EDUCATION INFORMATION PACKET

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Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

We Believe...

- All children can learn.
- All children have the right to a high-quality public education, which includes a focus on personal growth, social and emotional well-being, and academic achievement.
- A society of highly competent workers and responsible citizens needs a strong public education system. Innovation spurred by school districts is a primary way to ensure a strong, action-oriented public education system.
- An educated population is a cornerstone of a strong democracy.
- Strong public schools are the building block for local and state economic development.
- Academic curriculum decisions are a local school board responsibility, with curriculum decisions being made to meet the highest standards of academic rigor in order to provide students the opportunity to compete on a global scale.

We Know...

- The Blue Valley School District receives less funding per student than any other district in Kansas with an enrollment of over 8,000 students.(Derived from the KSDE report for the 2020-2021 school year.)
- The Blue Valley School District is the 12th lowest in funding per student out of 286 districts in Kansas. (Derived from the KSDE report for the 2020-2021 school year).
- The Blue Valley School District recoups 66.4% of its special education excess costs when state law prescribes a 92% rate.

Therefore, We Endorse...

- Measures and appropriate funding levels that encourage all school districts to pursue exemplary, and not just merely proficient, educational and well-being outcomes for their students.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for local control.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for increased funding levels in higher-cost areas.

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

Priority Positions

Fully Fund Special Education

The current school finance system should be modified to fully fund the excess cost of special education services.

Apply At-Risk Funding to Defined Student Measures

The current school finance system should be modified to include poverty factors and additional indicators such as ELL, student academic performance data, attendance data, foster care, juvenile justice and homelessness so as to meet the needs of these underserved student populations.

Cost of Living Authority

The cost of living authority is all locally funded. The maximum cost of living authority should be increased above the current 5% cap to allow Blue Valley to attract & retain qualified staff, given the cost-of-living in our district.

Enhance Student Mental Health

The Blue Valley School District urges expanded support for community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives. Further, the Blue Valley School District supports measures aimed at eliminating the possession, distribution and use of vaping products and other illegal drugs among school-aged students.

Oppose Tax Credits and Vouchers for Private Schools

Opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue that does not comply with the same standards and requirements of public school districts, including governance by an elected local school board.

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

Standing Positions

Local Control of Education Systems

The Blue Valley School District supports changes in state statutes that will allow for greater decision-making ability on the part of local Boards of Education to efficiently and effectively operate their education systems. This includes, but not limited to, the following:

- Opposing limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority.
- Remove regulatory requirements that hinder districts' ability to operate efficiently.
- The local school district being the sole determiner of the grade retention of students in its own district.
- The right of the local school district to control its virtual education course offerings and make its own decision on virtual education curriculum development and selection.
- The right to exercise local control as it relates to open enrollment.

Academic Rigor and Local Curriculum Decisions

The Blue Valley School District supports rigorous state standards of student achievement, even those above the Rose Standards. In addition, a local school board should retain the responsibility to select the curriculum to meet the state standards of student achievement.

Ability for Judicial Review of State School Finance Provision

The Blue Valley School District opposes any constitutional amendment that limits or eliminates a local school board's right to bring about a judicial review of state school finance provisions.

State Tax Policy for Education Funding

The Blue Valley School District supports a balanced and equitable tax policy to fund public education and opposes policies that allow for the shifting of the tax burden to the residential base as a result of commercial properties not being assessed to their highest and best use.

KPERS Funding

Urges the state of Kansas to continue to meet its responsibility to fully fund the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) without placing additional financial burden on local school districts.

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

BOTA Appeal Process

Supports the continuation of the ability to appeal for the extraordinary costs of opening a new school.

National Board Certification

Supports state appropriations to advance individual teacher candidates to receive national board certification.

Alternative Certification

Supports the ongoing efforts of KSDE in developing alternative teacher certification processes and any legislative actions to achieve an alternative certification system.

Early Education

Supports legislation that would increase state programming and support of early education programs, such as Parents as Teachers, without adversely impacting K-12 funding, as well as supports the ongoing investments of early childhood programs through the full use of the Children's Initiative Fund.

Sales Tax Exemption

Supports educational foundations being exempt from sales tax, as well as opposes any effort to expand the sales tax on school-related professional services.

State Mandates

Opposes any mandate which is not fully funded.

TABOR

Opposes legislative efforts (i.e., TABOR) that dictate expenditures only be allowed to increase at the rate of population and inflation, thus impairing the school district's ability to continue to provide education of exceptional quality.

Autonomy in Managing Resources

Opposes state mandates that weaken a local board's opportunity to choose the proper educational standards for its community or mandates that impede the ability of locally elected school boards to manage and allocate resources (i.e., 65% proposal).

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

Classroom Resources

Supports the inclusion of ancillary services (including, but not limited to, library services, counseling services, paraprofessional support, nursing services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and education support teams) into calculations of resources dedicated to student learning and achievement.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Supports the continued review of options to enhance certified staff recruitment and retention, including the use of KPERS incentives to retain current employees and expanding alternate licensure.

Non-Partisan School Board Elections

Supports school board elections remaining nonpartisan and returning school board elections to an even-year spring time frame.

Student Data Privacy Act

Supports changes in the Student Data Privacy Act so that no undue burden is placed upon school districts to comply with the requirements. Further, the law should be amended to exempt vision and hearing screening from the prohibition of collected data, as well as allow passive parental consent for surveys that are anonymous and voluntary, and comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Reserve Funds

Opposes legislative recapturing or sweeping of a school district's reserve funds.

Blue Valley Schools

Reimagining Learning | Changing the World

Blue Valley School District Goals

2022 - 2023 School Year

Finance & Operations

1. Create a bond project list with associated costs for Board consideration of a 2023 mail-in ballot election.
2. Evaluate school boundaries and develop a plan to address elementary school enrollment and building capacity issues.
3. Develop and deliver a balanced operating budget plan for the 2023-24 school year.
4. Design and construct the remaining 2020 bond projects prior to the start of the 2023-24 school year.

Academic Services

Accountability

1. Monitor student growth measures for the '22-'23 school year.
2. Monitor implementation of school blueprint goals while facilitating building focus on both lead and lag measures.
3. Implement research best practices associated with supporting building emphasis on the Core Four strategies and associated growth measure goals.

Literacy

1. Emphasize monitoring and analysis of student data following screener administration with an emphasis on providing intervention through tiered supports K-12.
2. Expand structured literacy professional learning for 6-12 as part of a comprehensive 6-12

renewed literacy plan.

3. In Spring 2023, 80% of Blue Valley K-1 students will be at or above benchmark on the Acadience composite score.

4. By Spring 2023, the average Reading MAP score at each grade level will increase by 2 RIT points as compared to Spring 2022.

5. As measured by the 2023 state-funded ACT, 75% of juniors will be at the ACT English College Readiness Benchmark and 63% of juniors will be at the ACT College Readiness Benchmark.

6. As measured by Spring 2023 KAP, 65% of students will score a 3 or 4 on the KAP ELA assessment.

Math

1. Facilitate and monitor the implementation of new iReady math resources at the elementary and middle school level.

2. By Spring 2023, the average Mathematics MAP score at each grade level will increase by 2 RIT points as compared to Spring 2022.

3. As measured by the 2023 state-funded ACT, 55% of juniors will be at the ACT Mathematics College Readiness Benchmark.

4. As measured by Spring 2023 KAP, 55% of students will score a 3 or 4 on the KAP Mathematics assessment.

High School Experience

1. The high school study team will present recommendations for revisions to the following areas by the conclusion of the '22 - '23 school year:

    - Present updated graduation requirements recommendation.
    - Identify courses for client connected projects embedded within revised curriculum.
    - Review extra curricular and co-curricular student opportunities.
    - Begin to reimagine high school schedule with a potential second semester recommendation.

2. Seventy percent (70%) of students in the class of 2023 will leave Blue Valley with a Market Value Asset (MVA).

3. Continue to implement Year 1 & Year 2 goals of BVEdge.

4. The BV Food Pantry planning team will continue planning to prepare for a spring 2023 opening.

Mental Health

1. Continue to expand within culture and climate an emphasis on mental well being in order to ensure learning environments which are trauma sensitive and, therefore, safe and accessible for all students.

2. Ninety-five percent (95%) of K-12 students will participate in a district-generated "Connections Survey" in Spring 2023, and ninety percent (90%) of eligible students will participate in the Spring 2023 Panorama survey.

Exemplary Educator

1. Compensate every educator competitively.
    - In partnership with associations, by the end of the 2022-23 school year, the salary schedules will reflect highly competitive wages.

2. Recruit highly skilled educators from a competitive and diverse candidate pool.
    - By the end of the 2022-23 school year, the district will increase the number of diverse candidates hired.

3. Build the capacity of every educator to ensure a transformative educational experience for every student.
    - In partnership with the associations and academic services, by the end of the 2022-23 school year, educators will have received district-wide quality professional development and training.

4. Increase efforts to retain and support every educator.
    - By the end of the 2022-23 school year, the district will increase the number of diverse candidates retained.

Blue Valley Strategic Plan
2020 - 2025

Beliefs

We believe…

- a path to happiness is essential for all.
- both mental and physical health are vitally important throughout life.
- inclusion through celebration of diverse perspectives fosters understanding and acceptance.
- relationships are essential to every aspect of life.
- everyone deserves equitable opportunities to flourish.
- collaboration and teamwork magnify individual and organizational excellence.
- empathy empowers one to understand and help others.
- everyone has the right to feel safe.
- self-worth and the ability to succeed are grounded in love, compassion, consideration, and belonging.
- honesty and integrity are fundamental to living a life of purpose.
- we are responsible for ourselves, our choices and the impact we have on others.
- positivity always, and in all ways, defeats negativity.
- confidence allows one to capitalize on opportunities, take appropriate risks and leads to resilience in the face of adversity.

Mission

The mission of the Blue Valley School District,
committed to Reimagining Learning and Changing the World,
is to ensure life readiness and personal excellence for all students
through a school culture characterized by

- exemplary educators
- safe and inclusive environments
- an atmosphere that fosters creativity
- and meaningful educational opportunities

to maximize the potential of ALL.

May 11, 2020

Strategic Objectives

1. All students will exercise voice and choice for their own learning.
2. All students will develop the skills to navigate an ever changing world.
3. All students will cultivate a solid foundation for personal academic excellence.
4. All students will lead healthy, balanced lives of physical, social and emotional wellbeing.
5. All students will develop strength of character to prepare them to lead a life of purpose.

Strategies

1. We will create strategically agile systems to fulfill our purpose.
    - Establish systems to intentionally allocate human and capital resources efficiently and equitably to ensure life readiness and personal excellence for all students.
    - Design a system of ongoing, fluid support to meet the diverse needs of students, increase equity and foster the development of well-balanced, happy, healthy students.
    - Establish systems that empower students to personalize learning through multiple or flexible matriculation pathways, such as graduation requirements, grade-to-grade movement, and/or course-to-course movement.
    - Provide relevant, effective, and ongoing *instructional* technology education for educators, students, and families to create capacity for current and future initiatives.

2. We will ensure engaging, meaningful and extraordinary educational opportunities for all students.
    - Respond to matters of unconscious bias, systemic barriers, and inequity with learning experiences that meet the individual needs of each student.
    - Respond to matters of social-emotional health, with learning experiences that empower students to lead balanced, confident lives.
    - ALL Blue Valley students will engage in high-quality literacy instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and digital literacy ensuring they are equipped for life.

- All students (K-12) will engage in authentic, relevant, and personalized learning experiences – including experiences directly connected to community and industry – that develop students' competencies, activate their interests, and nourish their sense of purpose.
- Blue Valley students will accomplish their learning goals through experiences that value learning as a uniquely individual and recursive process.

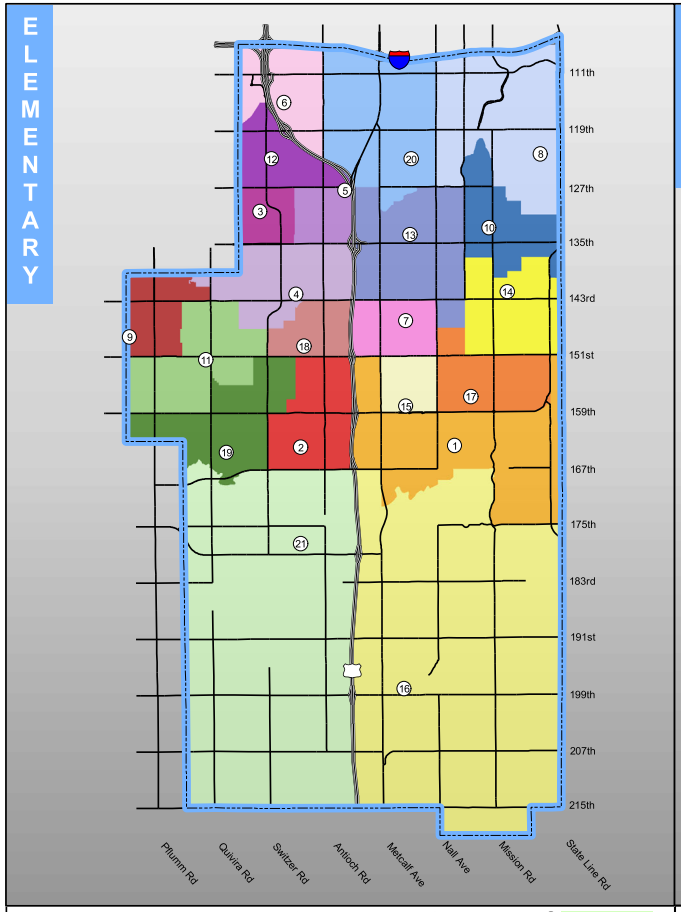
3. We will foster cultures of balanced health and well-being.
    - Foster cultures of balanced health and well-being for students.
    - Foster cultures of balanced health and well-being for staff.
    - Partner with families to foster cultures of balanced health and well-being.

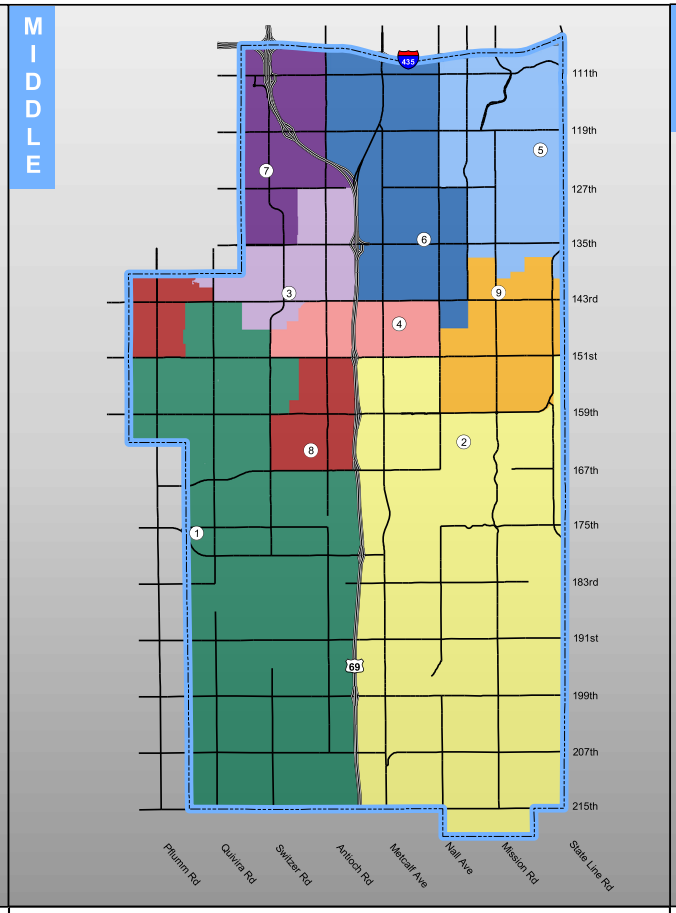
4. We will assure every Blue Valley student has exemplary educators assisting in their transformation.
    - Compensate every educator competitively.
    - Recruit highly skilled educators from a competitive and diverse candidate pool.
    - Build the capacity of every educator to ensure a transformative educational experience for every student.
    - Increase efforts to retain and support every educator.

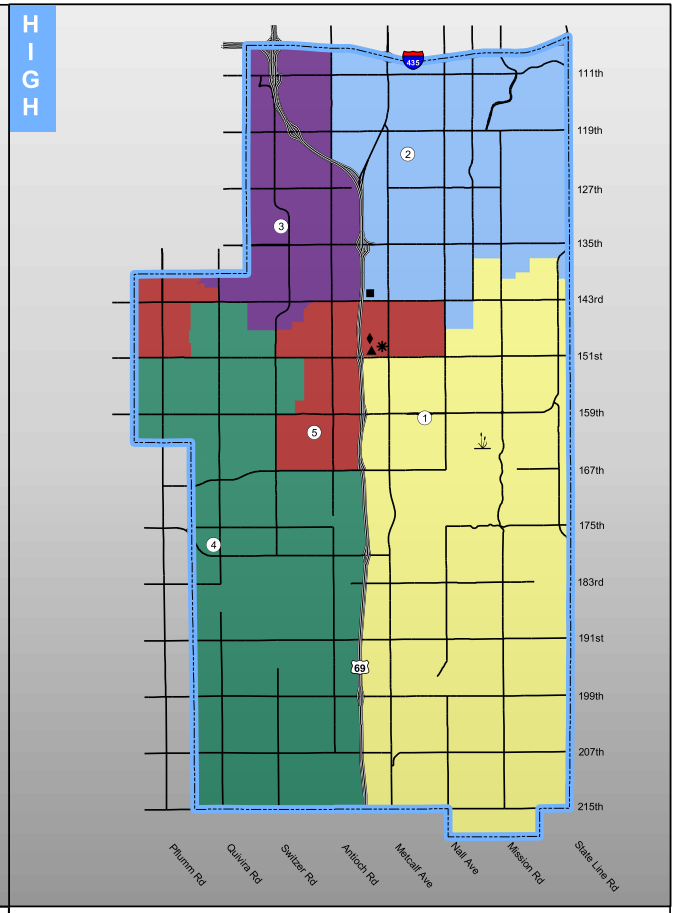
Parameters

1. We will make decisions based on what is best for students.
2. We will treat all people with consideration and respect.
3. We will communicate with honesty and transparency.
4. We will honor our past as we reimagine our future.
5. We will practice responsible stewardship of our resources.
6. We will not compromise our commitment to excellence.
7. We will honor and celebrate all who will champion this work to reimagine learning.

2022/23 BLUE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTENDANCE AREAS







1. BLUE RIVER
5101 W. 163rd Ter
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 6000

2. CEDAR HILLS
9100 W. 165th St
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 3300

3. COTTONWOOD POINT
10521 W. 129th St
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 239 - 6100

4. HARMONY
14140 Grant St
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 239 - 6200

5. HEARTLAND
12775 Goodman St
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 239 - 6300

6. INDIAN VALLEY
11600 Knox St
Overland Park, KS 66210
(913) 239 - 6400

7. LAKEWOOD
14600 Lamar Ave
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 6500

8. LEAWOOD
2400 W. 123rd St
Leawood, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 6600

9. LIBERTY VIEW
14800 S. Greenwood St
Olathe, KS 66062
(913) 239 - 7700

10. MISSION TRAIL
13200 Mission Rd
Leawood, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 6700

11. MORSE
15201 Monrovia St
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 239 - 6800

12. OAK HILL
10200 W. 124th St
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 239 - 6900

13. OVERLAND TRAIL
6225 W. 133rd St
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 7000

14. PRAIRIE STAR
3800 W. 143rd St
Leawood, KS 66224
(913) 239 - 7100

15. STANLEY
6121 W. 158th St
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 7200

16. STILWELL
6410 W. 199th St
Stilwell, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 7300

17. SUNRISE POINT
15800 Roe Ave
Overland Park, KS 66224
(913) 239 - 7500

18. SUNSET RIDGE
14901 England Ave
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 239 - 7400

19. TIMBER CREEK
16451 Flint St
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 239 - 7800

20. VALLEY PARK
12301 Lamar Ave
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 7600

21. WOLF SPRINGS
9300 W 178th St
Overland Park, KS 66013
(913) 624-2400

1. AUBRY BEND
12501 W. 175th St
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 624-2300

2. BLUE VALLEY
5001 W. 163rd Ter
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 5100

3. HARMONY
10101 W. 141st St
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 239 - 5200

4. LAKEWOOD
6601 Edgewater Dr
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 5800

5. LEAWOOD
2410 W. 123rd St
Leawood, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 5300

6. OVERLAND TRAIL
6201 W. 133rd St
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 5400

7. OXFORD
12500 Switzer Rd
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 239 - 5500

8. PLEASANT RIDGE
9000 W. 165th St
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 5700

9. PRAIRIE STAR
14201 Mission Rd
Leawood, KS 66224
(913) 239 - 5600

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BLUE VALLEY HIGH
6001 W. 159th St
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 4800

BLUE VALLEY NORTH
12200 Lamar Ave
Overland Park, KS 66209
(913) 239 - 3000

3. BLUE VALLEY NORTHWEST
13260 Switzer Rd
Overland Park, KS 66213
(913) 239 - 3400

4. BLUE VALLEY SOUTHWEST
17600 Quivira Rd
Overland Park, KS 66221
(913) 624-2000

BLUE VALLEY WEST
16200 Antioch Rd
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 3700

Blue Valley Academy
7500 W. 149th Ter
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 4529

Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS)
7501 W. 149th Ter
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 5900

District Office
15020 Metcalf Ave
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 239 - 4000

Wilderness Science Center
4951 W. 163rd Ter
Overland Park, KS 66085
(913) 239 - 5146

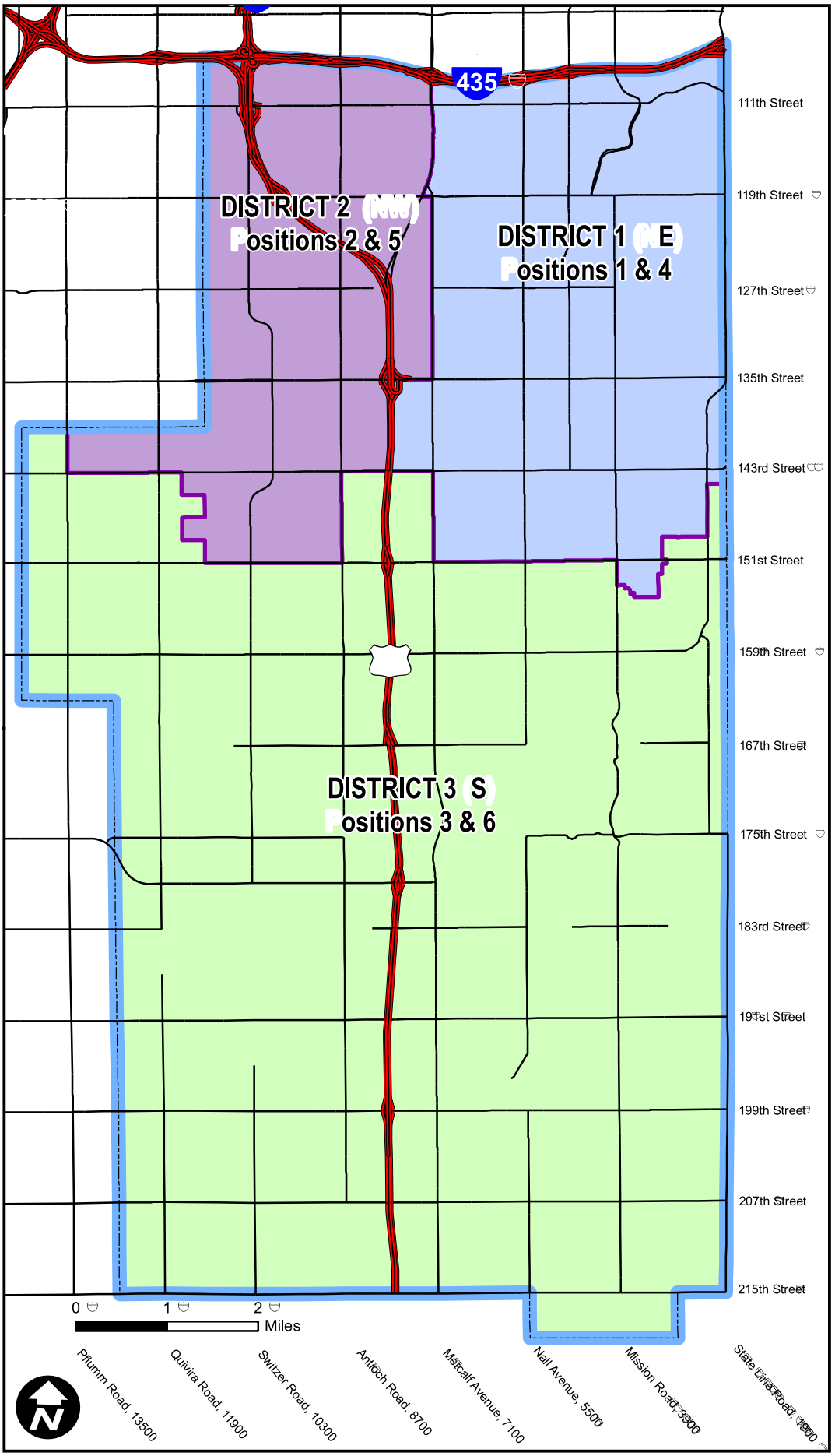
Hilltop Learning Center
7700 W. 143rd St
Overland Park, KS 66223
(913) 624-2900

BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS
Education Beyond Expectations

Please note that school boundaries are reviewed each year and are subject to changes annually. No guarantee of boundary constancy is intended nor implied by this product. Undeveloped areas may be assigned to any school in the district. If you have questions about a school attendance area, please call (913) 239-4058 or go to the web site: www.bluevalleyk12.org

Prepared by the BVSD Finance & Operations Department - July, 2022

Blue Valley Board Member Districts



Position 7 - At Large

Legend

Blue Valley School District

Major Streets

Highway

Arterial

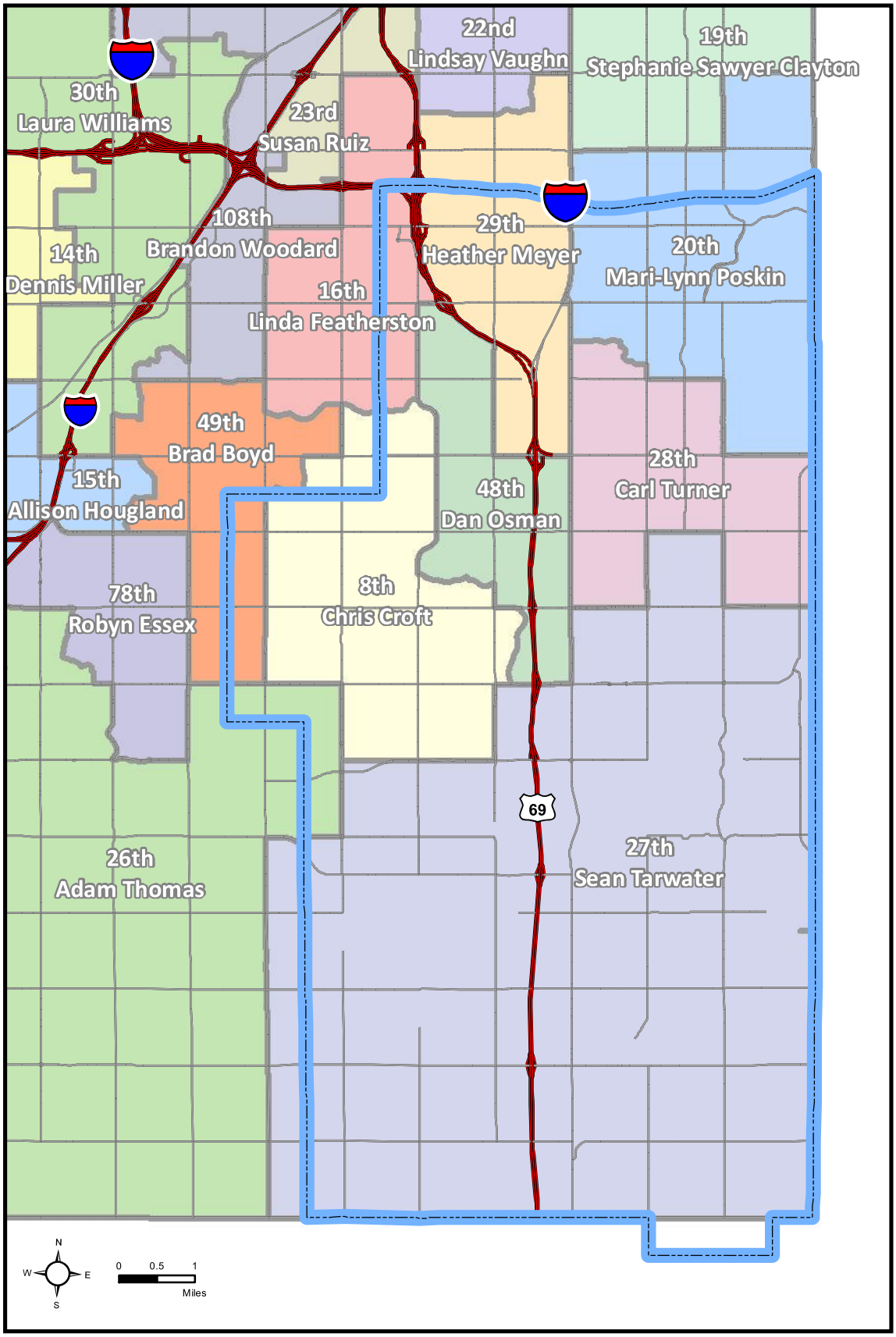
NOTES:

Supporting data provided by the Johnson County Election Dept

Last Revised: March, 2017

For further information contact the Facilities & Operations Department
Phone: (913) 239-4058 or
Email: epoflom@bluevalleyk12.org

Kansas House Districts: Blue Valley & Vicinity



Legend

Blue Valley

Roads

Street Classification

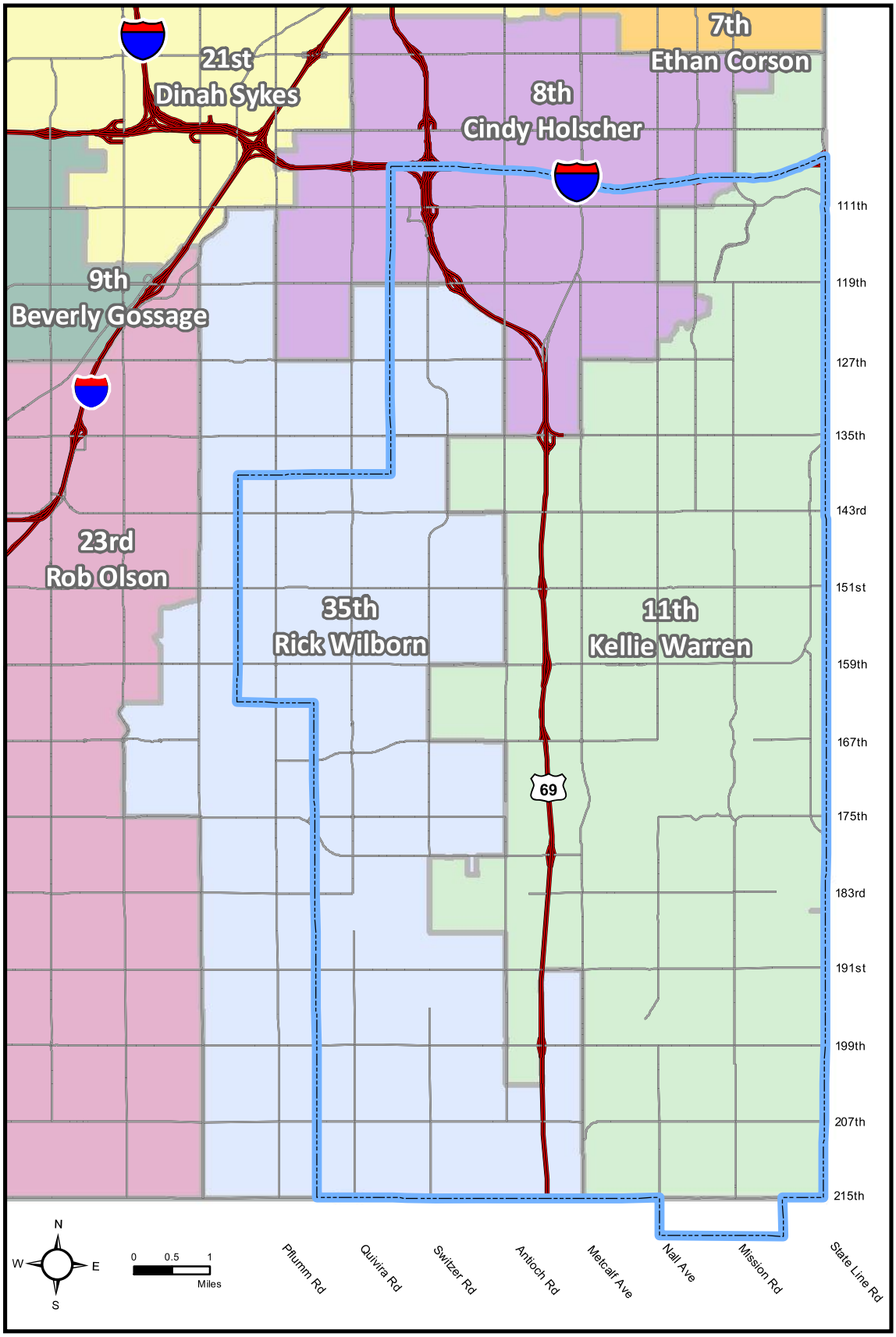
Highway

Arterial

Map created by Blue Valley Finance & Operations Dept. using data provided by Johnson County AIMS.

Updated January 2023

Kansas Senate Districts: Blue Valley & Vicinity



Legend

Blue Valley

Roads

Street Classification

Highway

Arterial

Map created by Blue Valley Finance & Operations Dept. using data provided by Johnson County AIMS.

Updated January 2023

BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS

Blue Valley Schools is committed to providing meaningful and extraordinary educational opportunities for all students. Located in suburban Kansas City in the heart of Johnson County, this 91-square mile school district serves nearly 22,408 students.

SCHOOLS

- 21 Elementary schools
- 9 Middle schools
- 5 High schools
- Blue Valley Academy (grades 10-12)
- Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) (grades 11-12)
- Hilltop Learning Center (up to 5 years old)

STAFF NUMBERS

- 1,882 certified employees
- 1,315 classified employees
- 74% of teachers have a master's degree or higher

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 22,408 Early childhood - grade 12 students
- 90 different home languages identified by Blue Valley students
- Ethnicity - Caucasian/White 68%; Asian 15%; Hispanic 7%; Multi-racial 6%; African-American/Black 4%; American Indian/Alaskan Native American 0.28%; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.02%

ACCOLADES

- All high schools named to U.S. News & World Report's best high schools list
- 2023 average ACT composite score of 23.7
- 2022 average SAT composite score of 1297
- Named 2022 Forbes #1 employer in the state of Kansas
- 18 Blue Valley students named U.S. presidential scholars in 16 years
- Named #1 school district and district with best teachers in Kansas by Niche 2023 Rankings

UNIQUE PROGRAMS

- **18-21 Program -** Serves 18 to 21-year-old students with disabilities with the ultimate goal of providing students with the skills and resources necessary to live and work as successfully and independently as possible within their community.
- **Language Immersion -** The district offers a Chinese dual language immersion program beginning in kindergarten.
- **CAPS -** Students are fully immersed in a professional culture, solving real world problems, using industry standard tools and mentoring by actual employers.
- **Academic Support Time -** One hour daily of personalized time offered to students at all high schools to meet their academic and social-emotional needs.
- **Social-Emotional Support -** A comprehensive team – including counselors, school psychologists, teachers, administrators and Children's Mercy Hospital licensed social workers – who support students' well-being.
- **Blended Learning -** An instructional practice that allows Blue Valley teachers to transform learning by leveraging technology to truly personalize learning.
- **Career-Ready Programs -** Provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers by emphasizing real-world skills and practical knowledge with a career focus.

Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Board of Education
Title	Authority
Code	1100
Status	Active
Last Revised	September 12, 2005
Last Reviewed	October 14, 2013

AUTHORITY 1100

The Board, as the governing body of the District, shall accept full responsibility for the general operation, management, and control of the District. In governing the District, the Board shall act in a policy-making capacity. It shall exercise executive, legislative, and judicial authority in order to promote the best interests of the District.

The Board shall retain the power to alter or veto the acts of any of its employees when such acts are deemed contrary to the legal policies or goals, or contrary to the legal obligations of the District, inconsistent with Board policies or goals, or contrary to the best interests of the District.

B.O.E. Amended 25 Aug 1980
B.O.E. Amended 10 Jul 2000
B.O.E. Amended 12 Sep 2005
B.O.E. Reviewed 14 Oct 2013

LEGAL REFERENCE: Kansas Constitution, Article 6, Section 5

CROSS REFERENCES: 1300 Duties of the Board
1520 Policies of the Board

Legal	Kansas Constitution Article 6, Section 5
Cross References	1300 - Duties of the Board 1520 - Policies of the Board

Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Board of Education
Title	Election of Board Members
Code	1200
Status	Active
Last Revised	May 8, 2017

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS 1200

Board members shall be elected as follows: Six members live in geographic member districts and one runs at-large. In a primary election, only residents from the geographic member district vote for the candidates. In all general elections, all residents vote for all candidates. Board members represent the interests of the entire District.

Board Member District Boundaries

Boundaries shall be as follows:

Board Member Districts No. 1 and 4 (Northeast). The Northeast District shall be comprised of that portion of the territory of the District described as: Beginning at the intersection of Interstate Highway 435 and the east boundary of the school district; then south along the east boundary of the school district to the point where it intersects with the south boundary of the City of Leawood; then west and south along the southern boundary of the City of Leawood to the point where it intersects with Mission Road; then north on Mission Road to the intersection of Mission Road and 151st Street; then west on 151st Street to the intersection of 151st Street and Metcalf Avenue; then north on Metcalf Avenue to the intersection of Metcalf Avenue and 143rd Street; then west on 143rd Street to the intersection of 143rd Street and US 69 Highway; then north on US 69 Highway to the intersection of US 69 Highway and 135th Street; then east along 135th Street to the intersection of 135th Street and Metcalf Avenue; then north on Metcalf Avenue to 119th Street; then west on 119th Street to Metcalf Avenue; then north on Metcalf Avenue to Interstate 435 Highway.

Board Member Districts No. 2 and 5 (Northwest). The Northwest District shall be comprised of that portion of the territory of the school district described as: Beginning at the intersection of Metcalf Avenue and Interstate Highway 435; then south along Metcalf Avenue to 119th Street; then east on 119th Street to Metcalf Avenue; then south on Metcalf Avenue to the intersection of 135th Street and Metcalf Avenue; then west along 135th Street to the intersection of 135th Street and US 69 Highway; then south along US 69 Highway to the intersection of US 69 Highway and 143rd Street; then west along 143rd Street to the intersection of 143rd Street and Antioch Road; then south along Antioch Road to the intersection of 151st Street and Antioch Road; then west along 151st Street to the SE corner of Harmony View Acres; then north along this subdivision line to the NE corner of Harmony View Acres; then west along this subdivision line to the SW corner of Stone Post Ranch; then north along this subdivision line to the NW corner of Stone Post Ranch; then east along this subdivision line to the SW corner of Deerbrook; then north along the Deerbrook subdivision line to the SE corner of Wilshire South; then west along this subdivision line to the SW corner of Wilshire South; then north along this subdivision line to 143rd Street; then west along 143rd Street to the intersection of 143rd and Pflumm Road; then north along Pflumm Road to the north boundary of the school district; then east along the north boundary of the school district to the west boundary of the school district; then north along the west boundary of the school district to Interstate Highway 435; then east along Interstate Highway 435 to the point of the beginning.

Board Member Districts No. 3 and 6 (South). The South District shall be comprised of that portion of the territory of the school district described as: Beginning at the intersection of Antioch Road and

143rd Street; then east along 143rd Street to the intersection of 143rd Street and Metcalf Avenue; then south along Metcalf Avenue to the intersection of Metcalf Avenue and 151st Street; then east along 151st Street to the intersection of 151st Street and Mission Road; then south along Mission Road to the southern boundary of the City of Leawood; then east and north along the southern boundary of the City of Leawood to the Kansas State Line; then south along the Kansas State Line to the south boundary of the school district; then west along the south boundary of the school district to the west boundary of the school district; then north along the west boundary of the school district to the north boundary of the school district; then west along the north boundary of the school district to the west boundary of the school district; then north along the west boundary of the school district to the north boundary of the school district; then east along the north boundary of the school district to the point where it intersects with Pflumm Road; then south along Pflumm Road to the intersection of Pflumm Road and 143rd Street; then east along 143rd Street to the NW corner of Wilshire South; then south along the subdivision line to the SW corner of Wilshire South; then east along this subdivision line to the NW corner of Deerbrook; then south along this subdivision line to the NE corner of Stone Post Ranch; then west along this subdivision line to the NW corner of Stone Post Ranch; then south along this subdivision line to the SW corner of Stone Post ranch ; then east along this subdivision line to the NE corner of Harmony View Acres; then south along this subdivision line to 151st Street; then east along 151st Street to the intersection of 151st Street and Antioch Road; then north on Antioch Road to the point of the beginning.

Board Member District 7 (At-Large). The at-large position shall be occupied by a person residing anywhere within the District.

The Blue Valley School District will comply with all state laws regarding the creation and maintenance of voting districts.

B.O.E. Amended 25 Aug 1980
B.O.E. Amended 14 Mar 1994
B.O.E. Amended 13 Jan 1997
B.O.E. Amended 10 Jul 2000
B.O.E. Amended 11 Dec 2000
B.O.E. Amended 13 Jan 2003
B.O.E. Amended 12 Sep 2005
B.O.E. Amended 11 Dec 2006
B.O.E. Amended 09 Dec 2013
B.O.E. Amended 20 Mar 2017
B.O.E. Amended 08 May 2017

Legal K.S.A. 72-1077

K.S.A. 72-1081

Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Board of Education
Title	Duties of the Board
Code	1300
Status	Active
Adopted	January 12, 2004
Last Revised	December 9, 2013

DUTIES OF THE BOARD 1300

The duties of the Board shall be guided by the goal of enhancing student achievement and to:

- Define a mission for the District
- Determine long and short term goals that will contribute to continuous improvement and move the District towards its mission
- Establish direction for academic standards for the District
- Establish and review the policies that set the parameters for Board governance and staff operations
- Approve budget and capital projects, and provide stewardship of the fiscal resources in relation to the mission of the District
- Make data-based decisions on the basis of what is best for the students
- Employ a Superintendent and evaluate his/her performance, thereby holding the Superintendent accountable for addressing the goals and performance expectations of the Board
- Monitor and evaluate the overall progress of the District
- Adjudicate issues that come to the Board via appropriate channels
- Model behavior consistent with expectations for the performance of all staff members
- Assure that the District abides by all applicable federal and state laws and district policies
- Participate in legislative and community advocacy

B.O.E. Adopted 12 Jan 2004
B.O.E. Amended 13 Jun 2005
B.O.E. Amended 12 Sep 2005
B.O.E. Amended 09 Dec 2013

Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Board of Education
Title	Conduct of Board Members
Code	1305
Status	Active
Adopted	June 13, 2005
Last Reviewed	October 14, 2013

CONDUCT OF BOARD MEMBERS 1305

A. Members of the Board shall conduct themselves in an ethical, businesslike and lawful manner, shall not misuse their authority as Board members, and shall display appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. The specific areas of emphasis which follow should not be construed as an exclusive list of those duties which are incumbent upon Board members.

B. Duty to Act Solely on Behalf of School District - Board members shall endeavor to represent the interests of all patrons and students. This accountability to the entire District supersedes:

1. Any conflicting loyalty a Board member may have to other advocacy or interest groups;

2. Loyalty to other organizations on which the Board member serves as a director or staff member;

3. Conflicts based upon the personal interest of any Board member who is also the parent of a student in the district; or

4. Conflicts based upon being related to any employee of the District.

C. Individual Authority of Board Members Except as otherwise provided by state law or other Board policies; individual Board members have no authority over the affairs of the district. Therefore:

1. Board member's interaction with the Superintendent and other administrative staff must recognize the lack of authority vested in individual Board members except when explicitly authorized by the Board;

2. Except as explicitly authorized by the Board as a whole, Board members must not purport to address the public or the press on behalf of the Board except to reiterate and reinforce actions taken by the Board as a whole. Absent such authorization, Board members addressing the public or the press must emphasize that they are doing so only as an individual Board member, and that they do not speak for the entire Board.

3. Board members will not publicly express individual negative judgments regarding the performance of the Superintendent or other staff of the District. Any such comments must be restricted to those made in an Executive Session of a Board meeting.

D. Duty of Confidentiality - Board members shall maintain strict confidentiality with respect to sensitive information and issues that otherwise may compromise the legal standing of the District, particularly the details of any matters discussed in an Executive Session of a Board meeting.

B.O.E. Adopted 13 Jun 2005
B.O.E. Reviewed 14 Oct 2013

Book	Policy Manual
Section	1000 Board of Education
Title	Duties of a Board Member
Code	1370
Status	Active
Adopted	January 12, 2004
Last Revised	May 9, 2005
Last Reviewed	October 14, 2013

DUTIES OF A BOARD MEMBER 1370

The duties of a Board member shall be guided by an understanding that the authority rests only at official meetings of the Board and that authority lies with the Board and not with any individual member, and

- Attend all regular meetings, special meetings, workshops, committee meetings, and other meetings and functions of the Board
- Prepare oneself prior to each meeting/function by reviewing all materials provided and seeking supplementary information as necessary and in conformity with Board policy
- Clearly present his/her position on each topic under discussion, actively listen to the positions of others and work to build consensus
- Make decisions that are in conformity with the policies and strategic plan adopted by the Board
- Vote his/her honest conviction on all issues, thereafter abiding by and supporting the majority decision
- Maintain awareness of the viewpoints of constituents on issues pertaining to the schools
- Recognize and respect his/her position as a representative of all stakeholders and as a role model for them
- Represent the Board at school and community activities/events as appropriate and/or necessary
- Should not disclose confidential district personnel information nor criticize specific employee actions in a public setting
- Direct patrons to appropriate administrative personnel
- Model behavior consistent with expectations for the performance of all staff members
- Report significant concerns and issues to the Board executive committee in a timely manner
- Report significant concerns and issues concerning district issues to the Board executive committee and the Superintendent in a timely manner
- Answer patron questions

B.O.E. Adopted 12 Jan 2004
B.O.E. Amended 09 May 2005
B.O.E. Reviewed 14 Oct 2013

CROSS REFERENCE: 1300 Duties of the Board
6340 Civility of Employees

Cross References

1300 - Duties of the Board

6340 - Civility of Employees

Blue Valley Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ADVISORY COMMITTEES ARE A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN THE BLUE VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT. THE COMMITTEES STUDY IMPORTANT TOPICS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION. THEY ALSO HELP FACILITATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN DISTRICT PATRONS AND THE BOARD. THERE ARE SEVEN STANDING COMMITTEES.

Communications
Promotes a more robust dialogue between the board and community by learning about and providing feedback on the different ways the board engages and communicates with the community.

Curriculum and Instruction
Provides the Blue Valley School District with a resource of knowledgeable and interested teachers, administrators and parents who would be willing to raise and study topics, review teacher revised curriculum, and make recommendations that will benefit each student, individually, and all students, collectively, by improving curriculum and instruction in the district.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Advises the Blue Valley School District on all areas of diversity, equity and inclusion resulting in thoughtful actions that respond to the needs of all students and staff.

Facility Planning
Examines and evaluates boundary alternatives and recommends a comprehensive boundary master plan to the board. This committee typically meets to recommend boundaries for new schools and on an as needed basis.

Finance & Operations
Monitors and advises administration and the board on finance related issues and trends, large facility improvement projects, and the general business and operations of the district, which includes printing, purchasing, transportation, enrollment demographics and planning, and food and nutrition services.

Health & Well-Being
Discusses and studies topics pertinent to the Student Services department in Blue Valley. The committee's goal is to provide Blue Valley Schools with a resource of knowledgeable and interested staff, administrators and parents.

Student Activities
Provides feedback and recommendations to the Board of Education with the goal of enriching and strengthening the district's many athletic and activities programs.

Committee members are appointed prior to the school year and serve two-year terms. Interested patrons can fill out an application online at www.bluevalleyk12.org. For additional information, please contact the Superintendent's Office at (913) 239-4040.

BLUE VALLEY SCHOOLS
Education Beyond Expectations

15020 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park, KS 66223

BOARD OF EDUCATION AVERAGE TIME COMMITTMENT

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS:	WHO ATTENDS:	WHEN:	FREQUENCY:	TIME OF DAY:	WEEKDAY:	LENGTH:
Workshop Board of Education Meeting	All Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	MORNING	2nd Monday	3 hrs.
Regular Board of Education Meeting	All Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	EVENING	2nd Monday	3 hrs.
COMMITTEES: Board Members are assigned 3	**WHO ATTENDS:**	**WHEN:**	**FREQUENCY:**	**TIME OF DAY:**	**WEEKDAY:**	**LENGTH:**
Finance & Operations Board Advisory	2 Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	EARLY MORNING	THURSDAY	1.5 hr.
Curriculum & Instruction Board Advisory	2 Board Members	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY EVENING	WEDNESDAY	1.5 hr.
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Board Advisory	2 Board Members	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY EVENING	THURSDAY	1.5 hr.
Health & Well-being Board Advisory	2 Board Members	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY EVENING	TUESDAY	1.5 hr.
Student Activities Board Advisory	2 Board Members	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY MORNING	THURSDAY	1.5 hr.
Communications Board Advisory	3 Board Members	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY MORNING	TUESDAY	1 hr.
Facility Planning Board Advisory	3 Board Members	Sept - May	AS NEEDED	EVENING	WEDNESDAY	1.5 hr.
PTO/A President's Council	Vice President & ea. BM Rotates	Sept - May	MONTHLY	MORNING	TUESDAY	1.5 hr.
BV Ed Foundation	2 Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	EARLY MORNING	TUESDAY	1.5 hr.
BV Recreation Center	2 Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	EVENING	WEDNESDAY	1 hr.
B.E.S.T.	President & ea. BM Rotates	Sept - May	MONTHLY	EARLY MORNING	WEDNESDAY	1 hr.
Special Ed Advisory	2 Board Members	Sept - May	5 X PER YEAR	EARLY EVENING	WEDNESDAY	1.5 hr.
Negotiations - Human Resources	3 Board Members	ALL YEAR	MONTHLY	TBD	TBD	10 hrs yr.

Strategic Plan	3 Board Members	AS NEEDED	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Bond Planning	3 Board Members	AS NEEDED	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
INVITATIONS & TRAINING:	**WHO ATTENDS:**	**WHEN:**	**FREQUENCY:**	**TIME OF DAY:**	**WEEKDAY:**	**LENGTH:**
School or District Invitations	All Board Members	Aug. - May	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	25 hrs yr.
Community or Chamber Invitations	All Board Members	Aug. - May	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	6 hrs yr.
KASB Training	All Board Members	Aug. - May	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	AS NEEDED	4 hrs yr.

AVERAGE TIME COMMITMENT

150 HOURS PER YEAR

BLUE VALLEY TODAY

SPRING 2023

New BV Food Pantry is a win-win

BV libraries: Heart of the school

BV implements new safety system

Teacher finds his true calling

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
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BLS

15020 Metcalf
Overland Park,
Kansas 66283

A Message from the Superintendent

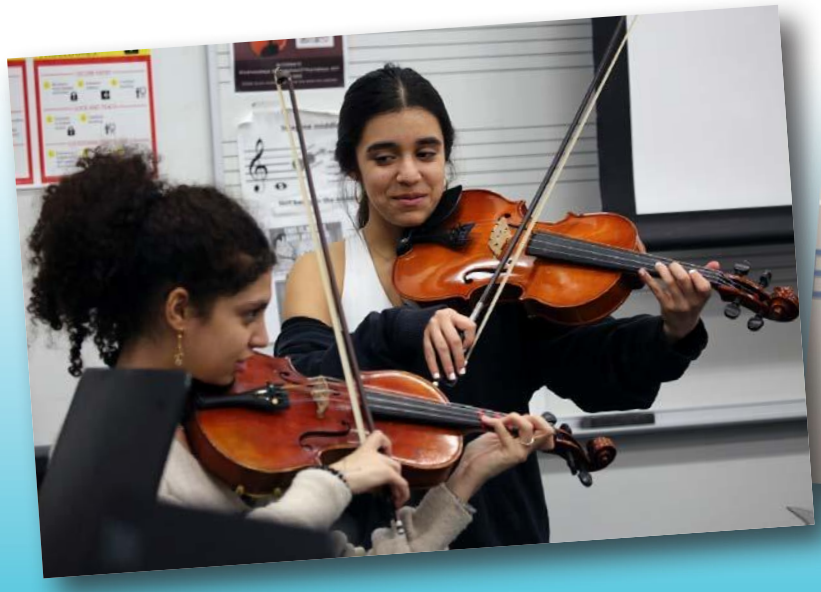
As we are nearing the final stretch of the second semester, I first would like to thank our community for your support, partnership and contributions that have led to a successful 2022-23 instructional year.

As you may have heard, the 2023 Blue Valley school bond election was certified by the Johnson County Election Office with a final approval rate of 70.69 percent. Thank you, Blue Valley! This continues a tradition of support in our schools that has left a lasting legacy of academic excellence and opportunities for our students, staff and community.

I value the confidence that our voters and community placed in our district. I look forward to continuing the collaboration as we build the foundation for student success. With this support, every school in our district benefits. The passing of this bond also provides funding for a new middle school in the southern portion of the district. I am excited to add middle school #10 to this growing area! If you have any questions about the next steps or project lists by school, visit the district website at www.bluevalleyk12.org/bond.

We have a lot more to celebrate as a district. This past year Blue Valley was named the #1 school district in Kansas and the 69th best district in the nation by Niche. Across our campuses, Blue Valley student achievement continued to reflect the district's reputation for excellence. Many of our students were recognized this year for their accomplishments at the state and national levels in academics, career and technical industries, and athletics and activities.

I have said this many times, but I will continue to express that the success of this district would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our nearly 3,100 educators and staff. I am proud to share that Forbes named Blue Valley the #1 Best Employer in Kansas. The positive school culture each building strives to create is a primary reason we rise to the top. In this issue, you will have an opportunity to read about some of our educators. I encourage you to read pages 5-7, and if you feel called to the profession, Blue Valley is waiting for you.



You will also have the opportunity to read about the new Blue Valley Food Pantry on pages 8-9. I am excited about the opening this spring! The Blue Valley Food Pantry is an opportunity for Blue Valley students with special needs to gain job experience and employable skills while giving back to our community and increasing food security.

As we move quickly to the end of another school year, I feel gratitude and admiration for our students, staff and families. Your dedication to one another and the mission of learning have made educational excellence possible for our students. We have much to celebrate. I am excited to see our seniors walk across the stage at graduation. Let's finish the school year strong!

Tonya Merrigan

Tonya Merrigan, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Blue Valley High junior Noor Haideri was named the winner of the 2023 Breakthrough Junior Challenge, an international competition with entrants from over 200 countries! Scan the QR code to watch as she was awarded a major scholarship and a gift for the entire school!

Blue Valley voters endorsed the bond election with an approval rate of 70.69 percent. The $251,250,000 bond will invest in facilities, safety and technology that will benefit students and staff for years to come. Scan the QR code to watch a thank you message from superintendent Dr. Tonya Merrigan.

Scan the QR code to read about the many accomplishments of Blue Valley students and staff this year.

Blue Valley Schools
15020 Metcalf Ave.
P.O. Box 23901
Overland Park, KS
66283-0901
(913) 239-4000

Superintendent
Tonya Merrigan, Ed.D.

Board of Education
Patrick Hurley, *President*
Kaety Bowers, *Vice President*
Jodie Dietz
Jan Kessinger
Gina Knapp
Jim McMullen
Tom Mitchell

Website
www.bluevalleyk12.org

For more information about Blue Valley Today, contact the Communications Department 913-239-4329.

A safe environment to learn: Centegix safety system installed in all buildings throughout the district

Continuing to provide a safe environment for students to learn in was a top priority when David Sharp, Blue Valley Northwest's new principal, first stepped foot into the school.

"A safe environment assists our students in gaining confidence to discover their talents and foster a curious, creative and innovative mindset," Sharp said.

Like Blue Valley Northwest, all schools throughout the district strive to create a positive and safe environment for students and staff. The district's commitment to safety has been rooted in a layered approach to physical safety and trusted relationships.

When students returned from winter break in January, the district added an additional layer of physical security to all schools and buildings–CrisisAlert™.

The new system empowers all staff members to initiate a call for help. With a simple push of a button on a specialized badge, building officials are alerted to everyday events such as medical or student emergencies or, in the event of a crisis, multiple clicks of the button can initiate a campus-wide lockdown.

"The implementation of this district-wide safety system was essential in my eyes," superintendent Tonya Merrigan said. "It is important to me that all staff members, no matter where they are, inside or directly outside a building, can initiate a call for help or completely lock down a building."

When a staff member presses the button on the specialized badge, a precise location is provided to building officials who can respond quickly in any situation, shaving seconds off response times.

"We have already utilized the Centegix system on multiple occasions for student medical situations where our school nurse responded and it has worked perfectly," Sharp said. "In a large building such as a high school, Centegix eliminates proximity guesswork; therefore, saving valuable time. I feel that it is a game-changer relative to student and staff safety in Blue Valley."

For Mahshid Hesani, Sunset Ridge Elementary special education paraeducator, this new safety system is a game-changer in her role. Hesani has been with the district for 18 years and has a profound love for teaching special education.

"Throughout all my years of teaching, I have worked to ensure that any classroom is a safe space for my students," Hesani said. "It's reassuring that now I, along with every employee, am able to initiate a call for help from anywhere."

The district's layered approach to safety is an intentional, constant and continuous process. The Centegix system adds another layer to ensure students and staff have a safe environment to teach and learn. When educators and students feel safe and secure, they can continue focusing on their goals: learning and academic achievement.

‘It’s truly special:’ Career change leads Blue Valley teacher to find his true calling

If you ask Jordan Dillon what he wanted to be when he first started college, he would not tell you a high school Latin teacher.

Dillon’s path to becoming an educator was far from a straight path. However, now in his second year of teaching Latin at Blue Valley High, he believes he is right where he belongs.

“Here at High, not a lot of people see this as just a job, and the students just don’t see it as ‘Oh, I just need to put in my hours,’” Dillon said. “People want to be here and help each other. I feel a sense of purpose every day I walk through the doors because of the people here.”

Dillon’s keen ability to build relationships, motivate and help students reach their full potential helped him excel in his first year of teaching last year — so much so that he was recognized in January as a 2023 Horizon Award winner.

The Horizon Award program, sponsored by the Kansas State Department of Education, recognizes only 32 exemplary first-year teachers across the entire state who perform in a way that distinguishes them as outstanding.

However, if it wasn’t for one experience Dillon had in college he would have never ended up becoming an educator. Dillon received his undergraduate degree at Truman State University, majoring in Latin and Greek, and continued on to receive his law degree at Washburn University School of Law.

After working at a law firm for a couple of years, Dillon realized it wasn’t his true calling. He started to think about what he wanted to do and look for other opportunities.

“I started to think about back when I participated in a summer program for my Greek classes where I got an opportunity to teach eighth-grade students basic Greek,” said Dillon. “This was something I really enjoyed but never fully envisioned as something I could do in the future.”

Scan the QR code to watch as Jordan Dillon is surprised with the 2023 Horizon Award

After speaking with family and friends, Dillon decided to pursue a career in education. In March 2021, after conversations with administrators in Blue Valley, he applied for and received his emergency substitute license from the Kansas State Department of Education. Dillon then applied for an open substitute position to teach Latin in the district. When he accepted the job, he knew this was the start of a new chapter in his life. Little did he know it would become a life-changing experience.

“I realized pretty early on that this is what I want to do,” Dillon said. “Every day I would come in and be able to be my authentic self and just teach. I could combine my passion for Latin and my newfound passion for teaching. From there on, I knew I had to find a way to become a permanent educator.”

A week after completing his substitute role, a Latin teacher position opened up at Blue Valley High. Dillon was offered and accepted the position in May 2021. Now more than a year later, he has found a home at Blue Valley High.

“It just goes to show you that if you’re like, ‘Oh, I didn’t get a teaching degree so it’s too late,’ it’s really not,” Dillon said. “I am almost 30 and just now starting. If you have a passion for something, there is always a path.”

Dillon is currently enrolled at Fort Hays State University in a two-year program called Transition to Teaching. In May, he will receive his fully-certified teaching license.

“This is where I’m supposed to be,” Dillon said. “There have been days when I have woken up and been tired, in a bad mood, or whatever else is going on around me. Then, as soon as I walk through the door, the bell rings, and I get to talking with my amazing students and all that negativity goes away. What other job can you go in and immediately get positive energy from those around you? It’s truly special.”

HEART OF THE SCHOOL:

Blue Valley libraries vital to student success, well-being and collaboration

Walking into Blue Valley North's library, you might notice something not found in every library: noise.

Blue Valley North's library isn't quiet and calm like some libraries people experience. But the school's librarians, Abby Cornelius and Terri Snethen, and students like it that way. The energy and camaraderie can be felt when you step through the doors.

The library feels bright and lively. The open space features a variety of seating areas, from high-top to genius bar-style tables where students can collaborate while standing.

Many of Blue Valley's libraries serve as the heart of the school, not just in location but in the services they provide to students. The days of only books being housed in a library are long gone. There are musical instruments, craft kits, 3D printers, chess sets and a board game collection.

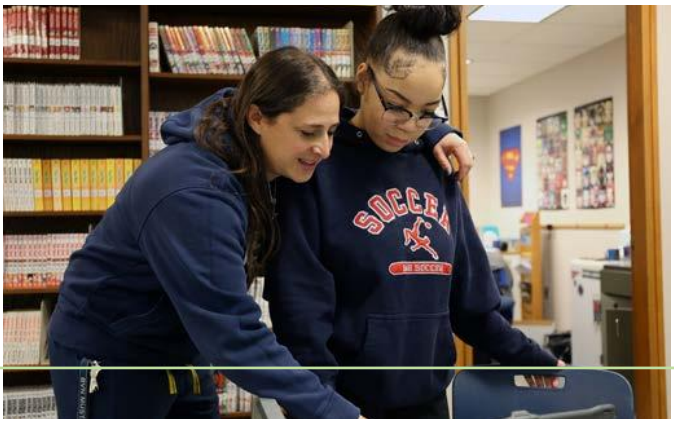
But it is Blue Valley librarians who make the students feel welcome and safe, and there's so much more to being a librarian than processing and checking out books and keeping shelves organized.

Being a librarian means teaching classes in collaboration with teachers, grading papers, ensuring the library is a safe and inclusive space, instructing on digital literacy and helping with homework.

"The purpose and goal is to meet as many needs as we can as frequently as we can and keep kids happy," said Cornelius.

Each school in the district has a library, with 40 librarians working across each school building.

"Our push is to be instructional leaders in our buildings," said Cristy Bolton, Blue Valley's library district coordinator. "We want to be partnering and co-teaching and collaborating with classroom teachers and content-level teachers."



When district initiatives, such as project-based learning, make their way to the school level, librarians work to gain as much knowledge about these initiatives so they can implement the strategies in their collaborations with teachers.

Librarians, who are required to be certified teachers, are also responsible for teaching library curricula to every student. To accomplish this, Cornelius and Snethen heavily rely on collaboration with teachers.

When a teacher brings their class into the library, the librarians assist with more than just classroom content.

"It's also our content of organization of information, producing information products," Cornelius said. "All of those things people just think kids know how to do, that's library curriculum. Library curriculum is learning. We are teaching how to learn, whereas content areas will be teaching what to learn."

Library curriculum isn't taught separately but in collaboration with teachers' content. Librarians work to make sure they weave library standards into lessons.

"We feel strongly that the things we are teaching are the real soft skills, life skills, employable skills — all the things everyone wants kids to come out with," Cornelius said. "Those are the things that are library curricula."

Day in the life of a librarian

It can be difficult for a librarian to explain what a typical workday looks like as each day is uniquely different, filled with various tasks of meeting students' needs, organizing the library, lesson planning, grading papers and co-teaching.

"It always starts with the kids streaming in as we are unlocking the doors, turning on lights, doing library chores," Cornelius said. "Ideally, the day is getting those little tasks done really fast, then teaching classes. In the meantime, we have kids who need help or are coming in and relaxing."

While one day may be heavier on organizing and lesson planning, the next could be filled with teaching classes and assisting with research papers.

Libraries vital to student success

Rarely a day goes by when Sumner Dowdy, Blue Valley North student, isn't in her school's library.

During her time at North, Dowdy has benefited in multiple ways from the library, whether it's a quiet place to work on a research paper or needing advice from Cornelius or Snethen.

"The library is more beneficial than I could ever explain," Dowdy said. "Our librarians are so amazing, and I think they are the best ones in the district or even the state of Kansas. I know their job is hard helping so many kids."

Dowdy said she has seen many of her classmates use the library to work on projects and papers or just to talk with a librarian.

"Our librarians are always there for us, and they give the best advice about school, relationships, things at home and everything in between," Dowdy said. "I never knew I could relate to a teacher or open up to someone at school like I can to them."

Librarians play a special role in schools and the lives of students, as they serve as one of the only teachers who have the opportunity to impact every student.

"We feel we are unique in that capacity to get to work with every teacher and every student and get to know them personally," Bolton said. "We want to connect with them not only as readers but as people.

"We want them to feel comfortable asking questions, and if they need something, there's a person in the building who can help them with that. We want all kids to feel seen and heard, and honestly, I think our librarians are at the forefront of some of those social-emotional learning pieces for kids."

Snethen said being a librarian is a big job and one Blue Valley librarians take seriously.

"The thing I want the community to know about libraries is that libraries are the great equalizer," Cornelius said. "It doesn't matter who you are, what you have, what you don't have, what you know, what you don't know — the library is going to provide you with whatever it is that you need. We don't judge, we don't control, we just provide."

Student job opportunities, serving the community come together to create

Blue Valley Food Pantry

Stepping into the Blue Valley Food Pantry is like stepping into a mini grocery store. Fresh, brightly colored produce is placed neatly in a corner, while cold products, like dairy, eggs and meat, sit in refrigerators and freezers. Canned goods and dry food products line the shelves.

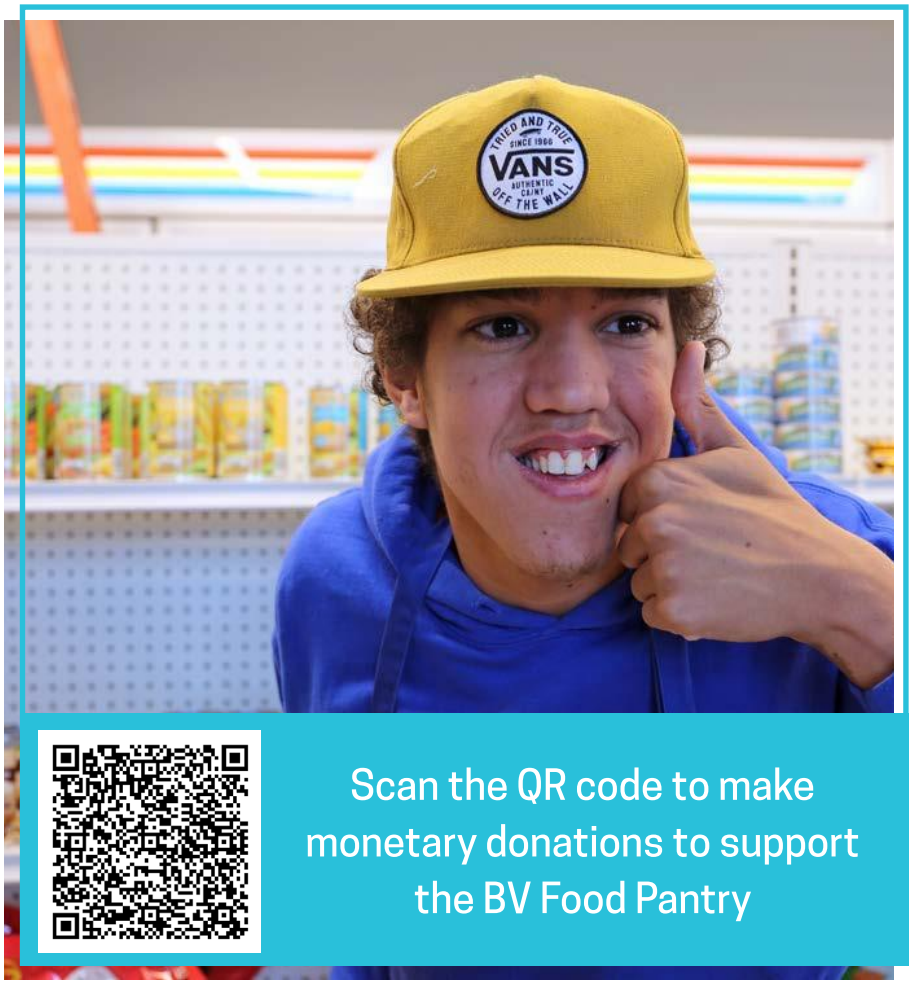
Community members grab a shopping cart and push it through the aisles, placing the products they need in their cart. Standing behind the checkout counter is a Blue Valley student, smiling and eagerly awaiting to assist the customers.

The Blue Valley Food Pantry is a new addition to the district's offerings — one that benefits all community members living within the district's boundaries. The pantry is stocked in partnership with Harvester's Food Network and Cosentino's Market. All food donations raised within the Blue Valley School District will go directly to the pantry.

The Blue Valley Educational Foundation secured funding from donors to build the Food Pantry.

"BVEF is eager for our students with special needs to learn and practice a range of vocational skills in a safe environment while giving back to our community and increasing food security," said Susan Tideman, BVEF's executive director.

The pantry, officially opening March 21, is located inside Hilltop Learning Center, 7700 W. 143rd St. The pantry will be open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and community members can make an appointment to stop by the pantry by visiting www.bluevalleyk12.org/BVPantry.



Scan the QR code to make monetary donations to support the BV Food Pantry

Demographic information will not be collected about families utilizing the pantry. If a family has a need, the Food Pantry will be there to serve them.

Upon entry, customers will be asked about family size so pantry employees can determine how much food they need to feed their families for the week.

While the idea for the pantry started as a way to expand the district's job opportunities for students, it has turned into more by becoming a service point for community members who need food.

"I truly believe we don't even know yet what a positive impact it's going to have," said Cassandra Delmont, Blue Valley's director of secondary special education. "We know that there are families in the district that need that assistance, and we know there could be employees that may need that, also. I think the reach and depth in which we're able to support our community while having these real-world work experiences for our students is just invaluable."

The pantry mimics that of a grocery store to create a similar experience for customers and Blue Valley students working.

The Blue Valley Food Pantry is an opportunity for Blue Valley students with special needs to gain job experience and employable skills.

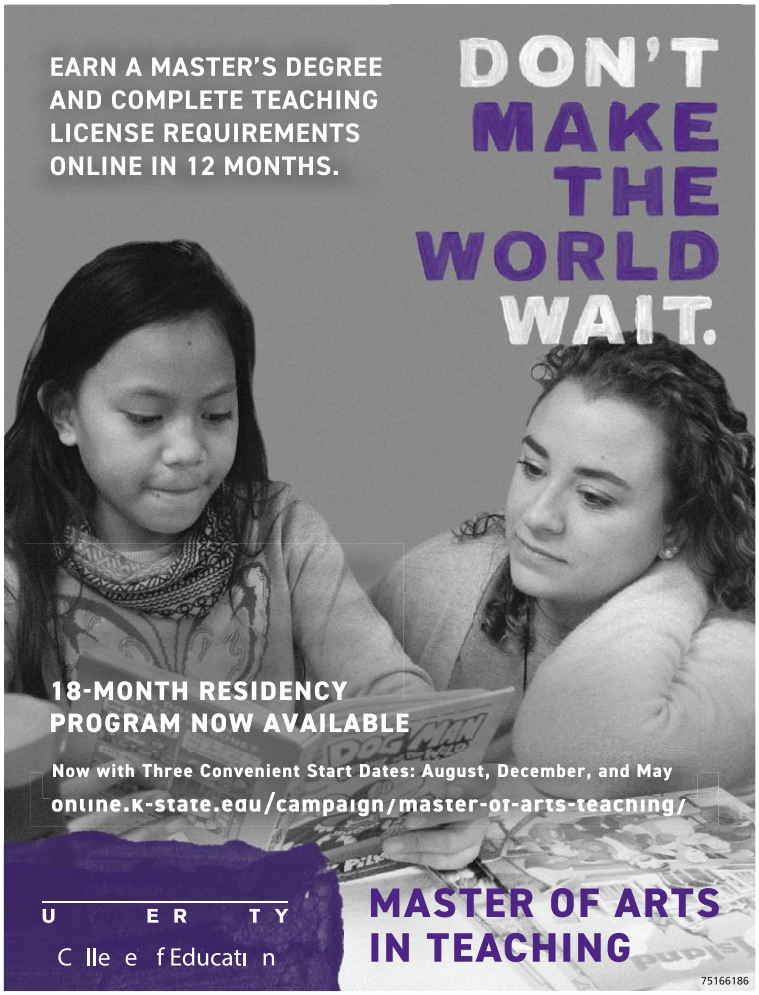
"This is going to be a program that our students at the high school level are going to use through the Community Development Opportunities Program (CDOP)," Delmont said. "One of the things I think we love the most about the pantry is that we truly believe any student with a disability, no matter where they fall on that continuum, can work and gain valuable skills that will potentially lead to competitive job opportunities."

Kaci Beichley, a transition specialist for Blue Valley, said students have the opportunity to learn many aspects of working in a grocery store, from organizing food on shelves to packing items in a grocery bag and communicating with customers.

"We can practice all those skills and have our students ready to go out in the community and be employable pretty quickly," Beichley said.

Beichley said she looks forward to the pantry becoming a reality and the services it will provide to the Blue Valley community.

"Our students are doing real work and giving back to the community," Beichley said. "I think that's powerful for them. A lot of our students consume a lot, but they don't have the opportunity to give back as much, so this teaches them very real work skills."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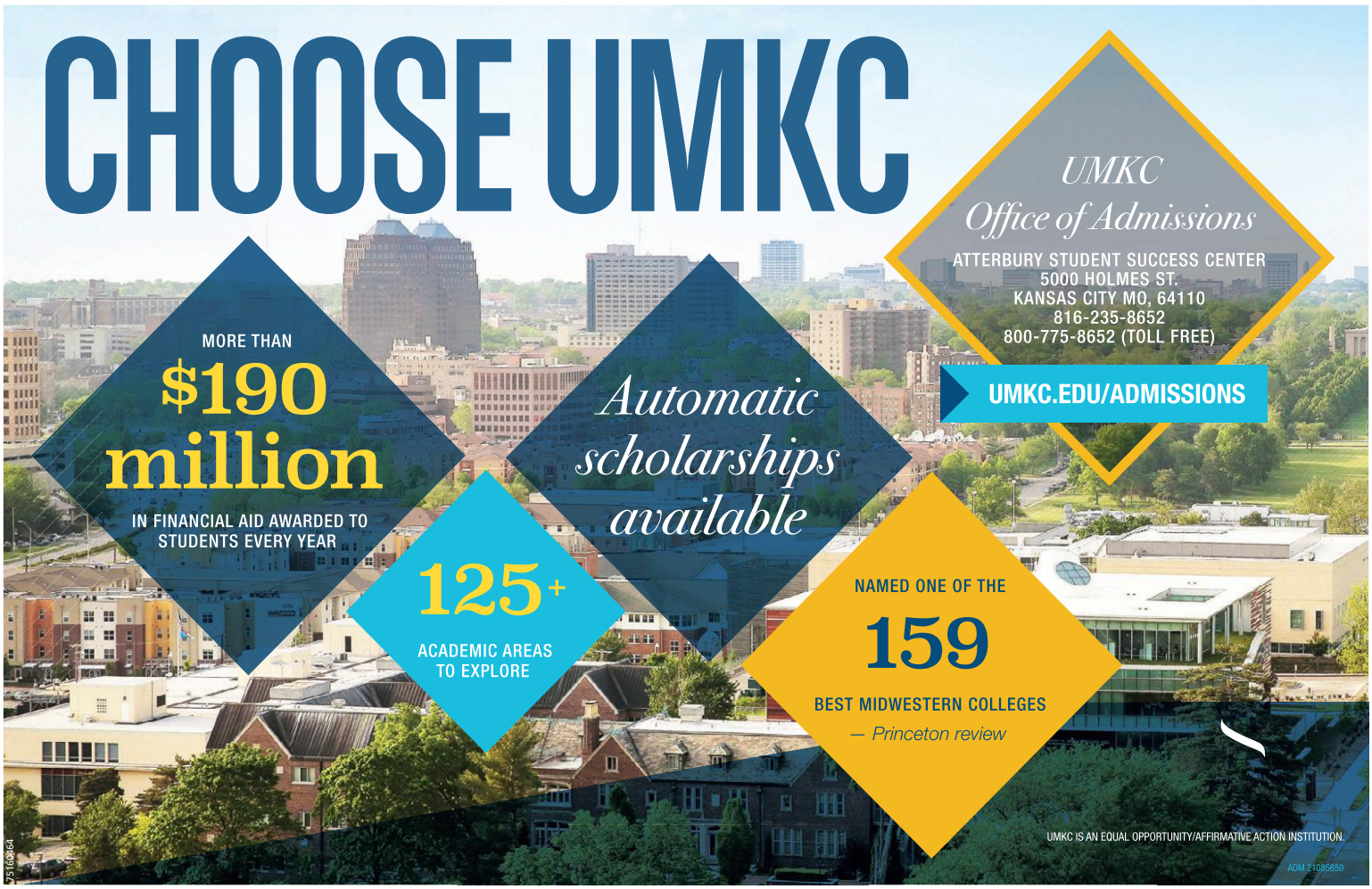
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