



4<sup>th</sup> Quarter  
**NEWSLETTER**  
2021-2022





# Lansing Unified School District 469

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Superintendent Dan Wessel

Lansing USD 469 Family,

As we have reached the end of the 2021-2022 school year, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for your generous support through another school year. Trusting USD469 with your child is one of the greatest gifts parents give to a school system. Reflecting on the growth a student achieves over a year makes being an educator worthwhile. The first day and last day photos are always a highlight to me this time of year.

Thank you to our Lansing USD 469 staff, who have met the challenges this year. The continued support that is provided by our staff to all of our families is why we truly have the "best of the best" here in Lansing.

Personally, I would also like to thank Miles Azzeh, Director of Teaching and Learning, for his hard work this year. The focus on academics from a dedicated employee is helping move USD469 forward. The focused work on our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) will help our district with transparency to what is being taught at every grade level. He has also helped shine the light on all things academics through his Academic Spotlights. Spotlights highlight the great work our teachers and students accomplish as they make learning fun and engaging.

USD469 continues to look toward the future and will need the community's help as we begin a strategic planning process at the beginning of the year. This process will help us set long-term goals that have our community's wants and desires at the forefront. If you would be interested in serving on this strategic planning committee, please reach out to me at [dan.wessel@usd469.net](mailto:dan.wessel@usd469.net). Our final product will be our roadmap for the district for the next five years.

I want to congratulate our graduating seniors and their parents and wish them the best of luck as they transition into the next stages of their lives. To our returning students, I hope you have a restful summer break, and I look forward to seeing you in August.

Dan Wessel  
Lansing USD 469 Superintendent of Schools

## STUDENT SHOUT-OUTS!

We will be highlighting students who have done something exceptional in each of our quarterly newsletters. This quarter, we would like to highlight two dedicated third graders who recently took the initiative to tidy up the elementary school playground by cleaning up the plastic chips that had gotten kicked out of their designated area.

Lukas Worrall noticed the need to clean-up during his recess time, and he and his classmate Gage Schimke began tidying up the area by putting the chips back where they belonged. Lukas even recruited other students to help with the initiative.



# LANSING USD469 DEPARTMENT UPDATES

## TEACHING AND LEARNING



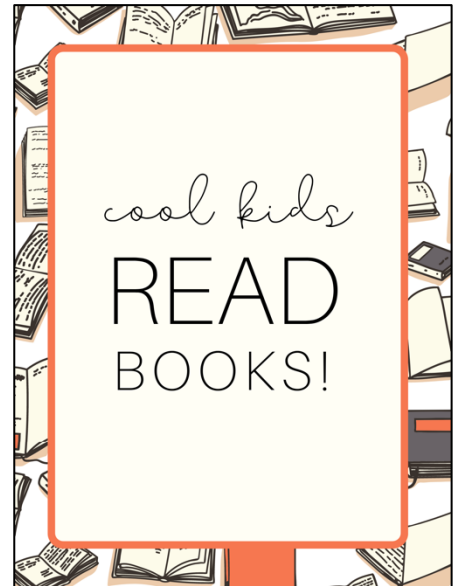
**Miles Azzeh**  
Director of  
Teaching & Learning

What a wonderful school year for our staff and students! It's been such a pleasure to become part of the Lion family and to be welcomed with open arms. While there are still many things that I'm excited about focusing on in the future, I am immensely proud of the work our students and staff have done in my first year here. Below are some highlights from the year, as well as some plans for next year!

### **D.I.R.T. and O.T.T.E.R at LIS**

Shout out again to our LIS teachers for implementing the daily recreational choice reading program with our students. I was able to see firsthand how engaged and excited students were while getting opportunities to read stories that they picked themselves. While conversing with students about their books, it was apparent they were invested in their reading and becoming better thinkers and learners. Reminder: countless studies have proven that [15 minutes a day](#) of reading will lead to better academic achievement, assessment scores, and vocabulary.

Daily recreational reading will continue to take place next year at LIS, with even more of an emphasis on getting the "right book in the right hands" of our students by providing more options for them to choose from. I also hope to extend this into our other buildings so that all students have the opportunity to foster and deepen their love of reading.



### **Teaching and Learning Website**

Thanks to Sharon Burns (Director of Communications and Marketing) for helping me set up and expand the district's Teaching and Learning website for staff, students, and parents to access valuable information and resources. I plan to continuously add more to it weekly to provide as much information as possible.

### **Academic Spotlights**

At the beginning of the second semester, I started spotlighting the great work our teachers are doing every day here in Lansing. There is a section entirely devoted to this titled "Academic Spotlights," and it has been so exciting to witness the effort put in by our staff and students as they become more intelligent every day. I plan on continuing these spotlights next year so that they are all recognized for their dedication and perseverance.

## **GVC (Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum) and Grade card changes K-5**

Under the guidance of myself, instructional coaches Jennifer Nickelson and Caroline Reynolds, and administration, our LES and LIS teachers, as well as our LMS and LHS Social Studies teachers, completed their GVC work for their courses. A GVC ensures that all students will learn the same critical information that is directly tied to state standards while also being mindful of how much can feasibly be learned in a school year. This work is vital to making sure all students are learning and that teachers have an idea of their progress.

Now that the GVC work is completed, we will be altering the grade cards at the K-5 level to align with them. Our grade cards will be focused on mastery of the standards and skills that students need to learn in order to be successful academically. Teachers will constantly be referring back to the GVC and checking for understanding to accurately assess what skills students have conquered and which they need more practice with. This will help parents/guardians have a better idea of their child's learning and aid in enriching and supporting them outside of school.

## **KESA Accreditation**

I've spoken in previous newsletters about the work we are doing as we move toward Year 5 (next year) of the accreditation cycle. Our district leadership team, under the guidance of Dan Wessel, has worked diligently to ensure that we are meeting the requirements that the state and our outside visitation team (OVT) have shared with us. We have our objectives and recommendations for next year and have already discussed with the DLT how we plan on completing the cycle strong and securing accreditation.

## **Next Year Plans**

Below are items that I plan on continuing or supporting the implementation of in the 2022-2023 school year:

1. Continuing our relationship with Greenbush to provide our staff with excellent professional development opportunities
2. GVC work and Transparency - Next year, we will focus on completing our GVC work in Math, ELA, and Science at the secondary level. We will also be posting this information on the district website for easy access and transparency.
3. Strategic Plan - We will be working with Greenbush to create our district's strategic plan. The community will also have opportunities to weigh in on this crucial work.
4. ION Data Warehouse - We have contracted with Ion-K12 to house all of our students' data so that we can be more effective when it comes to intervention and enrichment. Teachers will easily be able to access their students' grades and assessment history to help them improve upon their learning.
5. Strengthening our bond with the Lansing Community Library and helping our students discover their love of reading

I couldn't be happier to be a part of this district and community. I have been welcomed with open arms and have been impressed with the hard work and dedication of our staff. The kids are an absolute delight to be around, and I cannot wait to continue helping us be the best district in Kansas!

## COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING



**Sharon Burns**  
Director of  
Communications &  
Marketing

With classes no longer in session, communication through our website, app, and social media will slow down over the summer months. I will be working to tie up loose ends from the 2021-2022 school year and start planning for the exciting things to come.

One of the areas I will be focusing on is being able to share information from all classrooms across our district. Having one person cover district communication and each building makes this a difficult task. To combat that, we will have a communication liaison in each building that will share stories from classrooms and make sure all teachers are getting information to our communications department to feature.

### **Mobile App**

Please consider downloading our free Lansing USD469 mobile app if you don't already have it. The app is a great way to conveniently stay up to date on what's happening in our district. We will be sending a notification via our app this summer when enrollment is open.

To access the app, mobile users can link on the appropriate link below:



Android: [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.socs.usd469&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.socs.usd469&hl=en_US)  
iOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/lansing-usd-469/id1453887251>

Users can also download the app by visiting our website from a mobile device and clicking on the banner at the top of the screen.

Be sure your device is set to receive Notifications from the Lansing USD 469 app. If your notifications are turned off, you will not be alerted of important information sent from the district.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

As part of the Marketing piece of my position, I have recently been tasked with helping with teacher recruitment and retention. In April, I attended a Retention Summit through Emporia State University with Director of Special Education Ascendra Donald and Director of Teaching & Learning Miles Azzeh. The event was an excellent opportunity to go over the Kansas Teacher Retention Survey that was sent out earlier this school year to schools across Kansas and learn ways in which we can engage and retain good teachers.

We have taken that data collected through the Emporia State University and created a Climate and Culture Survey for all our staff. The results from our survey will be used to inform our Board of Education, certified administrators, and classified directors on the areas that need to be improved within our district.

If you have any questions or have ways in which we could improve communication in Lansing USD469, please reach out to me at [Sharon.burns@usd469.net](mailto:Sharon.burns@usd469.net)

## BUSINESS OFFICE



**Doniaell Brandt**  
Director of Finance

This summer, the district office will be open from 7:00 – 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The office will be closed on the afternoon of July 1 and the 4th of July holiday. School buildings will be open until June 10 from 8-3 and every Wednesday until July 31.

Online registration for returning students will open the last week of July for returning students and new students that have gone through the New Student Online Registration.

Parents and guardians will receive an email and a Skyward message on your student's portal when registration opens

## HEALTH SERVICES



**Kristen Dilka**  
District Nurse Coordinator

I am incredibly proud of our Lansing USD469 nursing staff, who successfully navigated another school year during the pandemic and all the other crazy things that come into our office daily.

I feel fortunate to be part of the new Lansing USD469 Health and Wellness committee, led by Dr. Jennifer Kolb. I wanted to give our parents and community some information about what we accomplished this year and the things we are

planning for the 2022-2023 school year.

### Health and Wellness Committee

This year, our goals were to increase visibility and interest within the community around the Wellness Committee, Policy and Plan and incorporate Social/Emotional Wellness into the Wellness Plan. To raise awareness, we reached out to each building's site council to solicit feedback and review the WellSAT 3.0 Tool, an assessment tool to help score and improve our wellness policies. To achieve our social/emotional goal, we brought in Psychologist Jake Hanson to help with how to incorporate social and emotional components into our wellness plan.

We developed our 2022-2023 goals during our May meeting, which will be to bring in a Body Venture presentation and health event to engage our families in hands-on activities that bring awareness to health and wellness. The second goal will be to continue to raise awareness of health and wellness by continuing updates of the committee through this quarterly newsletter.

On behalf of the Lansing USD469 nurses, we wish all of our parents, students, and staff and fun, restful, and healthy summer break!



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



**Kevin McCarley**  
Director of Emergency  
Preparedness

The summer months means children are outside more and able to be more active, which is fantastic, but we want parents to be cognizant of the dangers that these outside activities can pose.

### SWIMMING SAFETY

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention more children (1 in 4) die from drowning than any other cause of death except birth defects. For children between the ages of 1-14, drowning is the second cause of unintentional injury death, after motor vehicle crashes. Don't be a statistic! While

the cautionary list below is geared toward children, it applies to adults as well.

- Always ensure that there is adult supervision when children are swimming.
- Never leave a child alone in or near the water.
- Never let children swim alone; teach them to use the buddy system.
- Make sure children swim in supervised or designated areas.
- Never let a child swim during a storm or when there is lightening.
- Never use water wings and pool toys as life jackets.
- Make sure children know the depth of the water.
- Don't let kids dive or jump into water that is less than 9-feet deep.
- Don't chew gum or eat while swimming, diving, or playing in the water.
- Keep a first aid kit, phone, and emergency numbers near the water.
- Learn CPR.
- Have each child aged four and older complete a swimming program.
- Enforce all pool rules, including no running, pushing people in, or dunking other swimmers.
- Be sure to remove all toys from the water after everyone is done swimming, so they don't tempt small children to enter the water when an adult is not around.
- At the ocean, be careful of underwater currents and the wave action. Never run and dive into the waves head first.
- Don't swim in rivers, where fast-moving water is extremely dangerous and currents are hard to gauge.
- Don't overdo it when swimming; build up your endurance slowly.

Before venturing out into any body of water be sure to know your limitations! Swimming is not child's play, especially if you don't know how to swim. Be smart, be careful, be wise when swimming!

### BICYCLING SAFETY

Here are some tips on how you can prevent bicycle injuries and deaths, and remember: A large percentage of crashes can be avoided if motorists and cyclists follow the rules of the road and watch out for each other.

- Wear equipment to protect you and make you more visible to others, like an approved bike helmet, bright clothing (during the day), reflective gear, and a white front light and red rear light and reflectors on your bike (at night or when visibility is poor).
- Remember to use arm and hand signals.
- Ride with traffic, not against it.



- Avoid riding at night, if possible. If you must ride at night, install front and rear lights on your bicycle and wear reflective clothing. It's the law! Regardless of the season, bicyclist deaths occurred most often between 6-9 p.m.
- Be careful when riding in urban areas. Bicyclist deaths occur most often in urban areas (75%) compared to rural areas (25%) in 2020.
- Don't drink alcohol and ride.
- Ride a bike that fits you. If it's too big, it's harder to control the bike.
- Carry all items in a backpack or strapped to the back of the bike.
- Tuck and tie your shoe laces and pant legs so they don't get caught in your bike chain
- Plan your route, choose routes with less traffic and slower speeds. Your safest route may be away from traffic altogether, in a bike lane or on a bike path.

Bicycling is one of the best ways to get exercise, see the sights, and reduce your carbon footprint. However, bicyclists face a host of hazards. They often must share the road with vehicles, and injuries can happen even on a designated path.

## TECHNOLOGY



**Chris Fletcher**  
Director of  
Technology

The past few years have pushed technology in education in new directions. As technology is integrated into the classroom, we have made those teachers aware of the opportunities and challenges of using technology. The same is true for when students are allowed to utilize district technology at home. As we discussed technology policies these past few weeks, communication with parents has been a critical topic. Below are a few topics we have discussed.

Digital citizenship has become a popular topic in education. Technology is not only a new language but can create new environments with new risks and opportunities. The purpose of digital citizenship is to educate students to work in the digital world as healthy consumers of information. A popular resource for digital citizenship is Common Sense Media. This website provides background information on several Apps, websites, and various digital media. One goal we will be working towards is providing more resources on the district website.

The district has access to many educational resources that can supplement instruction in the classroom. Providing access to these resources at home is another way to provide educational opportunities to our students. Typically these resources are a combination of apps and websites with a different login process. We have been investigating ways to easily allow these resources to be accessed. It is not a simple process but a goal as we explore instructional technology opportunities.

Realizing there are also risks to utilizing the technology, we are also working on processes that will allow parents to manage the use of the iPad when the student is outside of school. This software is a component of the district's iPad management system. Examples of restrictions parents will be able to enable outside of school hours are:

- Setting time restrictions
- Restricting applications
- Filtering access to websites

More information on all of these items will be shared with parents as they become available on the district website and through our district communications.

## TRANSPORTATION



**Jim Slapper**  
Director of  
Transportation

For the 2021-2022 school year, the transportation department implemented our new enrollment policy approved by the board last year.

### **How it works:**

In May of last year, we started making announcements of our new policy for enrollment. We opened our early enrollment on July 22nd and closed the early enrollment on August 6th. Parents were able to register their students on our transportation website. Our early enrollment fee was \$25 per household. Students registered before the August 6th cutoff

were eligible to ride the bus on the first day of school. Any students registered after August 6th were not eligible to ride the bus until September 7th. Late enrollment then costs \$35 per household.

### **Why did we have this policy?**

In the past, we would have 500 to 700 students register for bussing within three days of school starting. This made it impossible to get our bus routes figured out and get our pickup and drop-off times out to parents before the first day of school. This became a significant safety issue. We found that many students did not know what bus they rode or what time the bus would pick them up.

### **Did the new policy help?**

This year all routes were posted on August 13th. That's 6 days before the first day of school. Parents could set up schedules, knowing what time the bus would arrive and what time they would be dropped off. We opened the late enrollment on September 7th for those that missed the early enrollment so they could now register for transportation. We received positive feedback on this new policy from parents.

### **Late activity buses for the high school and middle school**

This program was kicked off in early April. It allows students to participate in after-school activities that they quite possibly could not have participated in because of transportation needs. We have had around 20 middle school students and five high school students utilize this program.

### **Increase in Miles:**

This school year, our drivers have been busy. By the time school is over in May, we will have driven over 160,000 miles on school bus routes and over 50,000 miles in activity trips. Last year we only drove 92,000 route miles and 16,000 activity miles. It is nice to see everything returning to normal.

### **Staff:**

The transportation department has 3 full-time employees:

- Jim Slapper, Transportation Director
- Janine Shields, Transportation Coordinator
- Jeff Bohnsack, Mechanic/bus driver

The transportation department employs 34 School Bus Drivers. We also have six full-time Monitors. Bus drivers are hard to come by, so we are very fortunate to have as many drivers as we do. Our turnover rate is very low because Lansing USD 469 is a great place to work.

## NUTRITION SERVICES

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**Jennifer Zule**  
Director of  
Nutrition Services

### **A BIG THANK YOU!**

As the year comes to a close, I would like to thank my staff for doing an amazing job this year! We have endured some challenges with being very short-staffed at times, deliveries being shorted, and prices rising, but they worked together and did their best to make our students happy.

### **GETTING READY FOR SY 22/23**

Nutrition Services is working hard to gear up for next year. The grocery bid process has begun! We are also evaluating staff needs for new equipment and hiring new employees to make sure we are ready to feed our hungry students! Are you looking for a job? Working in the kitchen might be perfect for you! We have a variety of 3-hour and 6-hour positions open, and most accommodate you getting your student off to school in the morning and being off work an hour or two before school gets out. Apply online today ~ [https://usd469.socs.net/vnews/display.v/ART/5c24f6d07feae?in\\_archive=1](https://usd469.socs.net/vnews/display.v/ART/5c24f6d07feae?in_archive=1)

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

We plan K-12 menus to have a variety of fruits and vegetables! We strive to offer the following EVERY day:

- 1 fresh fruit
- 1 canned fruit
- 1 fresh vegetable
- 1 hot vegetable

Offering a variety makes it more likely that a student will choose a fruit and/or vegetable and ACTUALLY eat it, which is always our goal.

### **FREE MEALS CURRENTLY NOT EXTENDED FOR SY 22/23**

In early March, Congress did not extend waivers that allow all students to eat breakfast and lunch meals for free. Free meals are set to end on June 30, 2022. In late March, the Senate introduced a new bill that would allow free meals for students to continue. While we are still in limbo, awaiting a final decision, I wanted to make sure parents are aware of this and how this will impact them for SY 22/23.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

1. All students will go back to being full pay on July 1, 2022.
2. If you think you would qualify for free or reduced meals, you will need to fill out an application on Skyward. This will be available when you enroll your student on Skyward in July.
3. If your financial circumstances change at any time throughout the year, you can apply or re-apply.
4. If you have questions or need help, please contact Jenny Chmidling at [jenny.chmidling@usd469.net](mailto:jenny.chmidling@usd469.net).
5. Any money you put on your student's account will roll over to next year! If you want to get a jump start on next year's meals, you can start adding money to your student's account now.

## Summer Meals Text Number is now 914-342-7744

Welcome to the USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse aides low-income individuals or communities by providing food assistance and other nutrition and social services information, serving as an important tool in combating hunger and promoting economic mobility. The automated texting service which connects families to local summer meal sites has changed to 914-342-7744. The 97779 number that was previously in use is now discontinued. The new number is in operation and will be this summer.

\*Please note, the USDA National Hunger Hotline number has not changed. Individuals can still call 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE to speak with a representative who will find food resources such as meal sites, food banks, and other nearby social services. The No Kid Hungry Texting Line also moved to a new number. Parents and caregivers should text the word "FOOD" or "COMIDA" to 304-304 to find the nearest meal sites.

## CELEBRATING OUR SENIORS!

On May 11, we had our annual senior cookout serving hamburgers and hot dogs hot off the grill!



On May 20, we had our annual senior breakfast where we treat our seniors to all of their favorites after their morning graduation rehearsal. It's always great to see them all one last time!



## CUSTODIAL / FACILITIES AND GROUNDS DEPARTMENTS

Spring and summer are always busy for our facilities and grounds departments due to mowing and fertilizing grass and spraying for weeds on all district-owned property. Managing approximately 80 acres of property with a team of only four people is a daunting task, but our crew does an incredible job.

Many people don't realize all of the work our custodians do over the summer months to keep our facilities in tip-top shape. Each summer, the custodial team of approximately 30 individuals strip and wax floors, deep clean, clean out the lockers and put the classrooms back together. Our Director Alan Brandt also saves our district a lot of money by painting.

## LANSING EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



**Kara Thompson**  
Director of Lansing  
Educational Foundation

Lansing USD 469 would like to congratulate our 2022 Teachers of the Year, Educational Support Professionals of the Year, and our Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Each of these individuals were recognized at the Annual Honors Breakfast organized by Lansing Educational Foundation on Friday, May 6th.



Fourth-grade teacher Mrs. Laurie Holden was selected as the Elementary Teacher of the Year for her leadership within the district, the community involvement within her classroom, and ability to connect with her students.



Lansing High School Choir Director Brian White was selected as the Secondary Teacher of the Year for his passion and ability to inspire students.



Lansing High School Social Worker Rebecca Davis was selected as one of two Educational Support Professionals of the Year. Ms. Davis's ability to connect with students and create a safe environment for students to open up to her made her an obvious choice for the award.

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Lansing Elementary School para-educator Ms. Marvis Hundley was selected as one of two Educational Support Professionals of the Year. Ms. Hundley was selected for her positive attitude and community spirit.

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Lansing USD469 bus driver, Ms. Janie Gates, was selected as this year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Ms. Gates has been a bus driver for Lansing USD469 for the last 43 years and was selected because of her positive impact on the lives of countless students and parents through the years.

**Upcoming LEF Events:**

2022 LEF Gala - November 5, 2022 - Riverfront Community Center