



# NORTHERN VALLEY SCHOOLS USD 212

DISTRICT OFFICE  
512 WEST BRYANT PO BOX 217  
ALMENA KS 67622



ALMENA

PHONE (785) 669-2445

LONG ISLAND

A Monthly Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Northern Valley Schools was held Wednesday, March 4, 2026, beginning at 6:30 PM in the Almena High School , 512 W Bryant Street, Almena, KS 67622.

Shanna Hammond: Present  
 Brandi Keith: Present  
 Christopher Rogers: Present  
 Laquita Smith: Present  
 Hilary Van Patten: Present  
 Rich Wenzl: Present  
 Steven Whitney: Present

Also in attendance were: Amy Chandler (4th Grade Teacher), Adriana Ankenman (SPED Teacher), Suzie Brooks (Pre-school Teacher), Shelby Preston (Kindergarten Teacher), Angela Knuth (First Grade Teacher), Jessie Thalheim (MS/HS Science), Nita Lewis (HS English), Dean Lewis (Ag Teacher), Marvin Gebhard (GS/MS Principal), Ken Tharman (HS Principal/Superintendent), and Amber Brown (Board Clerk).

#### I. Call to Order

#### II. Adoption of Agenda

I recommend the board approve the agenda as presented. This motion, made by Laquita Smith and seconded by Shanna Hammond, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
 Brandi Keith: Yea  
 Christopher Rogers: Yea  
 Laquita Smith: Yea  
 Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
 Rich Wenzl: Yea  
 Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

#### III. Approval of Minutes

I recommend the board approve the minutes as presented. This motion, made by Rich Wenzl and seconded by Steven Whitney, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
 Brandi Keith: Yea  
 Christopher Rogers: Yea  
 Laquita Smith: Yea  
 Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
 Rich Wenzl: Yea  
 Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

#### IV. Approval of Bills

I recommend the board approve the bills as presented. This motion, made by Laquita Smith and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea



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Brandi Keith: Yea  
 Christopher Rogers: Yea  
 Laquita Smith: Yea  
 Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
 Rich Wenzl: Yea  
 Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

## V. Hearing of Visitors

### A. Nlta Lewis

Mrs. Lewis reviewed what each class was doing project wise. She reported the seniors are working on scholarships (three receiving Dane G. Hansen scholarships). Concessions will do one more event and the KAY will be going to pick up Krispy Kremes next week to wrap up that fundraiser.

### B. Dean Lewis

Dean introduced himself and shared a little of what classes were doing in the ag shop; they did mechanics-related projects these past nine weeks, and he is learning a lot as well.

### C. Amy Chandler

## VI. Old Business

### A. Transportation

Mrs. Lewis left at this time. Mr. Gebhard shared the updated list of vehicles, their uses, and the required needs/wants of the district. A 2015 Blue Bird school bus was purchased on Purple Wave this past week to help meet those needs. Mr. Gebhard also shared about a grant offered through Volkswagon regarding the purchase of a new bus.

### B. Building Accessibility

The board reviewed the rubrics that had been provided regarding the three best actions for classroom locations next year to accommodate our student needs. The guests present took turns sharing insight and possible solutions/alternative ideas to meet those needs. There was good discussion with the board during this time. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 7:42 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
 Brandi Keith: Yea  
 Christopher Rogers: Yea  
 Laquita Smith: Yea  
 Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
 Rich Wenzl: Yea  
 Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 7:42 meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 7:47 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
 Brandi Keith: Yea  
 Christopher Rogers: Yea



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Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 7:47 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 7:52 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 7:52 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 7:58 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 7:58 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 8:04 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0



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At 8:04 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 8:10 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 8:10 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy interests of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and returning to open session in this room at 8:15 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 8:15 PM the meeting returned to open session. President Hilary VanPatten stated that a final decision was not reached at this time. They were able to narrow the choices down to two (#1. Kinder to 2nd, 2nd to Title/SPED, Title/SPED to basement ... and #2. Kinder to 2nd, 2nd to Fourth, Fourth to Long Island). The board will use their walk-through on March 30th to help them visualize these two possibilities with the plan to make a decision at the April meeting.

#### C. Window Screens

Mrs. Chandler, Ms. Ankenman, Mrs. Brooks, Ms. Preston, and Mrs. Knuth left at this time. Mr. Gebhard shared the latest window screen options with the board. The final choices will be made shortly with the plan for installation in early summer.

#### D. KESA Update

Mr. Tharman shared about the yearly KESA (Kansas Education Systems Accreditation) review that was done on Tuesday, March 3rd. Now that the GS staff will be trained in LETR's and have the Seal of Literacy on their license, the action plan for the coming year will involve implementation.

#### E. Uniform Rotation

The recently purchased golf shirts were shared with the board. Jessie Thalheim shared the possibility of adding Cheer to the rotation.

#### F. Shot Clock / Scoreboards

Mrs. Thalheim passed out several bids for shot clocks and scoreboards and went over each company's pros and cons. Although there was no decision to be made at this time, she wanted the board to see the wide range of possibilities. Mr. Lewis left after her presentation.

#### VII. Personnel



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## A. Staffing

At this time the board took a five minute recess to stretch. Mrs. Thalheim departed at this time. Upon reconvening; I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy of the individuals to be discussed; retaining Mr. Gebhard and Mr. Tharman and return to open session in this room at 9:08 PM. This motion, made by Laquita Smith and seconded by Christopher Rogers, Carried.

Shanna Hammond:	Yea
Brandi Keith:	Yea
Christopher Rogers:	Yea
Laquita Smith:	Yea
Hilary Van Patten:	Yea
Rich Wenzl:	Yea
Steven Whitney:	Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 9:08 PM the meeting returned to open session; no action taken.

## B. Administrative Contracts

I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy of the individuals to be discussed and return to open session in this room at 9:18 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Steven Whitney, Carried.

Shanna Hammond:	Yea
Brandi Keith:	Yea
Christopher Rogers:	Yea
Laquita Smith:	Yea
Hilary Van Patten:	Yea
Rich Wenzl:	Yea
Steven Whitney:	Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

Mr. Tharman was called into the room at 9:14 PM. Mr. Gebhard was called in at 9:16 PM. At 9:18 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board go into executive session to discuss nonelected personnel matters to protect the privacy of the individuals to be discussed and return to open session in this room at 9:23 PM. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Steven Whitney, Carried.

Shanna Hammond:	Yea
Brandi Keith:	Yea
Christopher Rogers:	Yea
Laquita Smith:	Yea
Hilary Van Patten:	Yea
Rich Wenzl:	Yea
Steven Whitney:	Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

At 9:23 PM the meeting returned to open session. I recommend the board extend Mr. Tharman and Mr. Gebhard's contract for one year; making them both two-year contracts. This motion, made by Christopher Rogers and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.



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- Shanna Hammond: Yea
- Brandi Keith: Yea
- Christopher Rogers: Yea
- Laquita Smith: Yea
- Hilary Van Patten: Yea
- Rich Wenzl: Yea
- Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

### C. Supplemental

I recommend the board approve the hiring of Jeremiah Hansen as the HS assistant track coach. This motion, made by Steven Whitney and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

- Shanna Hammond: Yea
- Brandi Keith: Yea
- Christopher Rogers: Yea
- Laquita Smith: Yea
- Hilary Van Patten: Yea
- Rich Wenzl: Yea
- Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

### D. Leave Request

I recommend the board approve the leave request as presented. This motion, made by Steven Whitney and seconded by Christopher Rogers, Carried.

- Shanna Hammond: Yea
- Brandi Keith: Yea
- Christopher Rogers: Yea
- Laquita Smith: Yea
- Hilary Van Patten: Yea
- Rich Wenzl: Yea
- Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

## VIII. New Business

### A. Out-of-District Requests

Information was shared with the board regarding notification dates for out-of-district students that are determined to be not in good standing as well as possible enrollment next year.

### B. 2026 - 27 School Calendar

I recommend the board approve the 2026-27 calendar as presented by the NVEA. This motion, made by Laquita Smith and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

- Shanna Hammond: Yea
- Brandi Keith: Yea
- Christopher Rogers: Yea
- Laquita Smith: Yea
- Hilary Van Patten: Yea



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Rich Wenzl: Yea

Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

### C. Negotiations

The board discussed the opening letter for negotiations with the NVEA. I recommend the board approve putting the suggested items into the opening letter for negotiations. This motion, made by Shanna Hammond and seconded by Steven Whitney, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea

Brandi Keith: Yea

Christopher Rogers: Yea

Laquita Smith: Yea

Hilary Van Patten: Yea

Rich Wenzl: Yea

Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

### D. KASB Legal Assistance Fund and Membership

I recommend the board approve renewal of the KASB membership and Legal Assistance Fund as presented. This motion, made by Rich Wenzl and seconded by Laquita Smith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea

Brandi Keith: Yea

Christopher Rogers: Yea

Laquita Smith: Yea

Hilary Van Patten: Yea

Rich Wenzl: Yea

Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0

## IX. Administrative Reports

### A. Superintendent / 9-12 Principal Report

Mr. Tharman stated the well will be sampled again in 2027/ The Harris Solutions called informing of large increase this year for the accounting software/ American Fidelity rep was here and saw all employees/ track practice starts next week for the HS/ Forensics in full swing/ Golf will be starting after break/ Powerlifting meets starting this weekend/ 7 - 12 Student-led conferences on March 10th/ KAY going to get Krispy Kremes on March 12th/ Spring break Mar. 16 - 20/ National Honor Society Induction ceremony Mar. 23/ Body Venture Mar. 24/ Senior class trip Mar. 26 - 27/ Prom decorating to start at the end of the month/ and state assessments will be starting soon.

### B. K-8 Principal Report

Mr. Gebhard reviewed the in-service on Feb.13th and the upcoming one May 20th/ State assessments are all scheduled/ JH hosted scholars bowl last week and we placed 2nd in both divisions/ grade school had 100th day celebration/ and 5th - 8th grade students had Phillips County EMS teach life saving skills today.

## X. Reports of Board Members

## XI. Adjournment



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I recommend the board meeting adjourn. This motion, made by Shanna Hammond and seconded by Brandi Keith, Carried.

Shanna Hammond: Yea  
Brandi Keith: Yea  
Christopher Rogers: Yea  
Laquita Smith: Yea  
Hilary Van Patten: Yea  
Rich Wenzl: Yea  
Steven Whitney: Yea

Yea: 7, Nay: 0