

The Sterling Jet Brief is designed to provide our community with a clear and concise summary of the key discussions and decisions made at each Sterling School Board meeting. Our goal is to keep you informed about the progress of our schools and to foster an open dialogue between the board and the public.

Next Meeting

Date: May 18, 2026
Time: 7:00pm
Location: Sterling Public Schools Library

The Public is welcome to attend

Our Guiding Principles

Our Mission

Sterling Public Schools will educate students to excel, prepare to compete, inspire to serve, and challenge to learn.

Our Vision

All Sterling Public Schools Students will achieve their full potential.

Sterling Board of Education

Mark Horstman, President
Julie Saathoff, Vice President
McKenzie Saathoff, Secretary
Russ Trauernicht, Treasurer
Rick Vollman, Board Member
Lauren Weyers, Board Member

Board Goals

Goal IV: Budget Planning and Management

Objective: Develop and implement a transparent, student-centered budget planning and management process that aligns financial resources with district priorities, supports academic success, and ensures fiscal responsibility.

Strategy I. Establish a collaborative budget that is data-driven and allows for input from principal, board, and stakeholders. Prioritize resource allocation to support identified student needs, instructional goals, while monitoring expenditures through consistent reporting and accountability to the board.

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A month in review at Sterling



Family Fun Night: Family Fun Night was a big success, bringing together our elementary families for an evening full of fun and activities. Attendees enjoyed mini golf, cake walks, bingo, and the chance to win book prizes. Mr. Gossard kept the energy high from the DJ booth, helping make the night even more memorable. A special thank you goes out to everyone who donated a golf hole, baked goods, silent auction baskets, or their time to run an activity. It was clear that everyone in attendance had a wonderful time.



Purple Day: Sterling students showed their support for military families by participating in Purple Day through the Tecumseh VFW. Observed on April 15, the day honors the strength and resilience of military children. Students wore purple, representing all branches of the military, to recognize and celebrate the sacrifices these children make.



Stop Day: High school students enjoyed "Stop Day," a break from their daily routines. With perfect weather, students spent the day outdoors playing football, wiffle ball, and bags. Competing in teams for bragging rights, the event brought plenty of fun, energy, and a chance to recharge before the final stretch of the school year.



Matt Slauson: Sterling students had the opportunity to hear from former Husker offensive lineman Matt Slauson during a special visit. He shared a powerful message about the importance of perseverance, building a strong culture, and getting involved in the opportunities available to them.

Admin & Committee Reports

Superintendent's Report: The superintendent's included discussion around efforts to enhance district facilities and programs, including a Facilities CTE Actions grant application for next year to support agriculture and shop offerings. An update was also received from CMBA regarding the kitchen space of the elementary addition project. On the legislative front, LB 1050, related to 3rd grade reading requirements, did not advance after failing to secure enough votes to end debate and is unlikely to be reconsidered.

Principal's Report: The principal's report highlighted NebraskaREADS updates, including the adoption of DIBELS 8 to replace FastBridge as the district's early literacy screener, along with noted challenges related to time demands and consistency in administration. Progress with AIM Pathways under the CLSD initiative was also shared as it approached the halfway point.

The report outlined several schoolwide initiatives focused on improving consistency and student support, including grading revisions, elementary realignment, and updates to report card practices. Efforts to integrate resilience training into daily practice were also noted, along with a review of the bell schedule to better utilize intervention time at the junior high and high school levels.

The report concluded with sincere appreciation for the facilities CTE of the Mini Golf Fun Night, thanking all staff, volunteers, and community members who contributed to making the event possible. It was recognized as both a well-attended community-building event and a successful fundraiser, with proceeds continuing to support the playground upgrade project. The principal also noted that the elementary project remained in a holding pattern, with the district awaiting further developments and planning updates before moving forward.

AD/Transportation Report: The transportation report highlighted ongoing vehicle maintenance, including tire replacements, sensor repairs, and A/C work across several district vehicles, as well as the installation of a driver's education brake in one of the new minivans. Additional support for afternoon bus routes is expected soon as a new driver has completed licensing.

In activities, the district looks forward to a guest speaker, Bill Busch on May 14 sponsored by the Sterling Youth Sport Association. Seasonal preparations are underway, including servicing lawn equipment.

Athletically, both junior high and high school track seasons are progressing with conference and district meets approaching. The high school district meet will take place Wednesday, May 13, at Pawnee City. The trap team is midway through its season with conference and state competitions coming soon. The state meet will be at Doniphan April 30-May 2.

Action Items

Commendations: The Board of Education and Administration commended both the Sterling Speech Team and Coach Kendra Matkins for a successful season marked by dedication, preparation, and strong performances. Students earned multiple medals at the State competition and represented Sterling Public Schools with pride, reflecting both their hard work and Mrs. Matkins' leadership and commitment to the program.

The Board also recognized Mrs. Alexis Hahn and Mrs. Angie Bianchi for their outstanding efforts in organizing and supporting Family Fun Night. Through their planning, coordination of volunteers and donations, and attention to detail, the event was well organized and enjoyable for all. Their work created a positive experience for students and families and demonstrated a strong commitment to the school community.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

Property Purchase: Discussion was held on the purchase of the property at 275 Lincoln street. The Board determined that the current asking price is too far apart from their current offer to consider a counteroffer at this time. However, the property purchase will remain under consideration, and the Board confirmed that their previous offer remains in place.

ACTION TABLED

Policy 4039.1: The Board approved the repeal of Policy 4039.1, Employment Terms for Classified Staff. Following guidance from the district's attorney, it was determined that the provisions outlined in this policy are more appropriately addressed through individual employee contracts and the staff handbook.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

Policy 6007: The Board approved revisions to Policy 6007 related to the recognition of academic achievement for graduating seniors. The updated policy transitions from a class rank system that identified valedictorian and salutatorian to a Latin honors system (cum laude) based on GPA ranges. The revised policy also adjusts some coursework requirements for graduation honors consideration and provides broader recognition of student achievement through tiered honors distinctions. The revisions in the policy will take effect for the 2026-2027 school year.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

[Policy 6007 - Latin Awards Update](#)

Classified Staff Wage Ranges: The Board of approved classified staff wages as maintained for the 2026–2027 school year, supporting the district's ongoing commitment to maintaining competitive compensation and recognizing the important contributions of classified employees.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

Certified Contract Approvals: The Board approved the renewal of contracts for all certificated staff for the upcoming school year

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

Approve 2026-2027 Calendar: The Board of approved the school calendar for the 2026–2027 school year, establishing dates for the year, including start and end dates, holidays, and scheduled breaks. Notable changes include the implementation of a four-day preschool week, dedicated time within the daily schedule for structured intervention, and early dismissal at 2:04 p.m. each Friday for staff professional development.

MOTION PASSED: 5-0, 1 Absent

[SPS School Calendar 26-27](#)

Discussion Items

Policy Review: The board reviewed policies 4016–4034. The 4000 series of Nebraska School Board Policies addresses personnel matters, including staff employment practices, compensation, evaluations, and working conditions for both certificated and classified employees. Action taken earlier in the meeting included the repeal of Board Policy 4039.1, as well as the revisions to Board Policy 6007.

Next Meeting

Next Meeting: The next scheduled board meeting will be regular May meeting on May 18, 2026 at 7:00pm in the Sterling High School Library.

