2025-2026

USD Budget Profile

USD #368 - Paola

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2025-2026 Budget – General Information
USD #368:

Introduction

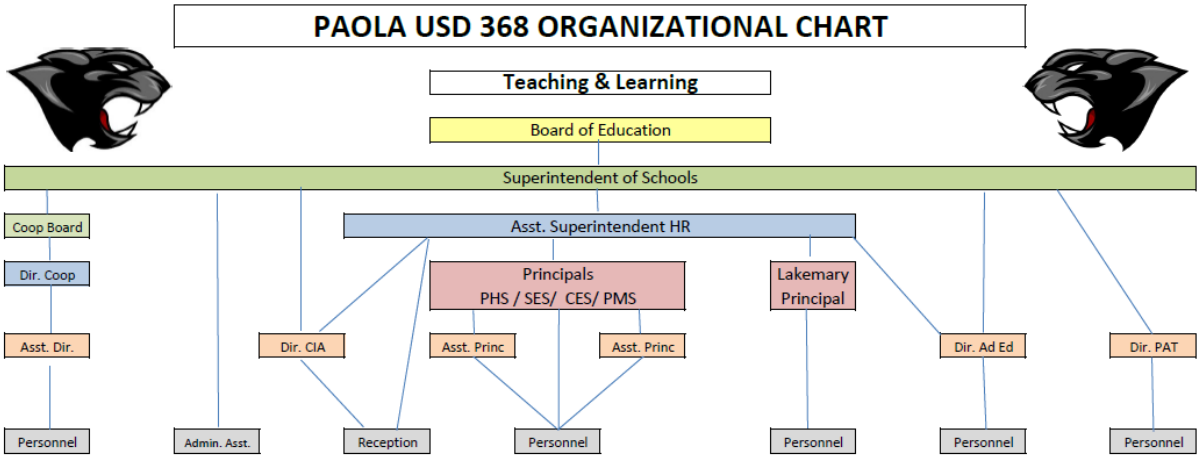
Paola Unified School District #368 comprises 200 square miles almost entirely in Miami County, Kansas. The district has four schools, Cottonwood Elementary (prek-2), Sunflower Elementary (3-5), Paola Middle (6-8), and Paola High (9-12). The district is the sponsoring district for the East Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative, housed at the Hillsdale Learning Center, which comprises eight school districts. USD #368 hosts a Parents as Teachers Program and a member of the Greenbush Educational Service Center. A well-respected member of the Frontier League, USD #368 is a 4A district that excels in academics, activities, and athletics.

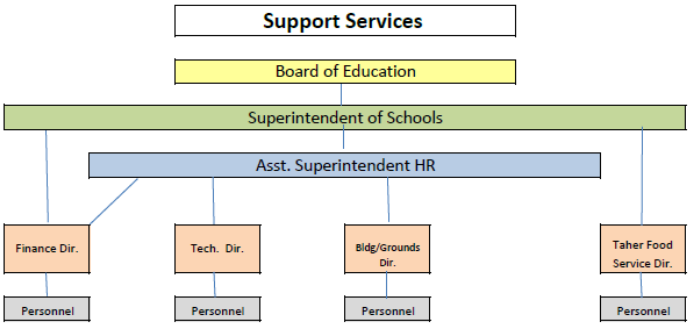
Board Members

District #1	Shawn Miller	shawn_miller@usd368.org
District #2	Scott Golubski	scott_golubski@usd368.org
District #3	Amanda Gerken	amanda_gerken@usd368.org
District #4	Kelly Franke	kelly_franke@usd368.org
District #5	Samantha Poetter Parshall	samantha_poetterparshall@usd368.org
District #6	Michelle Latto	michelle_latto@usd368.org
At-Large	Kristian Gerken	kristian_gerken@usd368.org

Key Staff

Superintendent	Matt Meek
Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources	Justin Burchett
Director of Business & Finance/Clerk	Jimmy Hay
Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment	Amy Wright
Director of East Central Kansas Special Education Cooperative	Kris Holt
Director of Buildings & Grounds	Scott Teagarden
Director of Technology	Jim Prothe
Board of Education Treasurer	Jenny Myers
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/Deputy Clerk	Loralei Crum





The District's Accomplishments and Challenges

Paola USD 368

Strategic Plan

2021-2026

VISION: Ensuring Success for All Students

MISSION: The Paola School District mission is academic success and personal growth for every student.

BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS

CURRICULUM

- Provide necessary supports and resources to allow students to be prepared to enter Kindergarten and feel socially and emotionally supported in and out of school.
- Utilize Individual Plans of Study to prepare students for graduation and post-secondary success.

BUDGET

- Effectively plan and budget to maintain strong academic curriculum for student learning while also balancing for the following:

⇒ Enrollment decline

⇒ Expanded learning opportunities funded by ESSER funding in years 2021-2024 to alleviate learning loss due to COVID-19.

FACILITIES

- Update facilities to match current and future needs of students including Career and Technical Education.

⇒ Gather feedback from the community, BOE, USD 368 staff, students, and other stakeholders to determine needs.

COMMUNICATION

- The district will effectively communicate with parents and community stakeholders at both the district and building levels.

⇒ Gather community feedback utilizing community scientific survey every three years.

⇒ Utilize social media, Panther Alerts, district website, and other community resources to disseminate information to students, parents, and the community.

- The district will partner with both City and County Government on projects to better the community of Paola and Miami County as a whole.

Accomplishments: Sunflower Elementary was recognized as a 2024 National Blue Ribbon School.

Staff and students continue to uphold the district's mission of striving for academic success and personal growth for every student. This is accomplished through the constant review of standards and curriculum materials being used to align with those standards. Staff continually strives to improve instruction and programs.

Key Success Indicators:

- 2022-2023 Graduation Rate: 98.0%
- Five Year Graduation Average: 96.3%
- District ACT Average: 20.3
- Five Year Postsecondary Effectiveness Rate: 54.6%

All elementary teachers have been trained in the Science of Reading and over half have or will receive their Seal of Literacy by end of this school year. Remaining elementary, special education, and secondary English teachers are on track to receive their Seal of Literacy within the next two years.

Challenges:

Increased costs and decreased funding due to lower student enrollment is a major challenge. These issues make it hard to stay competitive in both salary and benefits to recruit a shrinking talent pool of teachers. It is a delicate balance increasing salaries and maintaining a competitive benefits package to recruit and retain quality staff while dealing with other increased educational costs. Finding qualified teaching staff continues to be at a critical stage. Licensed positions have remained unfilled or are being filled with alternative licensed staff. Multiple classified positions, including para-professionals, custodians, food service, etc. remain unfilled due to lack of applicants.

The district has lowered the chronic absenteeism rate and it remains lower than the state average, but it is still too high, effecting teachers' ability to educate students when they are not in class.

Supplemental Information for the Following Tables

1. Summary of Total Expenditures by Function (All Funds)
2. Summary of General Fund Expenditures by Function
3. Summary of Supplemental General Fund Expenditures by Function
4. Summary of General and Supplemental General Fund Expenditures by Function
5. Summary of Special Education Fund by Function
6. Instruction Expenditures (1000)
7. Student Support Expenditures (2100)
8. Instructional Support Expenditures (2200)
9. General Administration Expenditures (2300)
10. School Administration Expenditures (2400)
11. Central Services Expenditures (2500)
12. Operations and Maintenance Expenditures (2600)
13. Transportation Expenditures (2700)
14. Other Support Services Expenditures (2900)
15. Food Service Expenditures (3100)
16. Community Services Operations (3300)
17. Capital Improvements (4000)
18. Debt Services (5100)
19. Miscellaneous Information – Transfers (5200)
20. Miscellaneous Information Unencumbered Cash Balance by Fund
21. Reserve Funds Unencumbered Cash Balance
22. Other Information – Enrollment Information
23. Miscellaneous Information Mill Rates by Fund
24. Other Information – Assessed Valuation and Bonded Indebtedness

Note: FTE is the audited enrollment 9/20 and 2/20 (if applicable) and estimated for the budget year, which includes preschool-aged at-risk and virtual enrollment. Enrollment does not include non-funded preschool. Beginning 2017-2018, full-day Kindergarten is 1.0 FTE. Beginning 2021-2022, three-year-old at-risk students were funded. This information is used for calculating Amount Per Pupil for Sumexpen.xlsx and Budget At A Glance (BAG).

KSDE Website Information Available

K-12 Statistics (Building, District or State Totals) Report Generator:
https://datacentral.ksde.gov/report_gen.aspx

- Attendance / Enrollment Reports
- Staff Reports
- Graduates / Dropouts Reports
- Crime / Violence Reports

School Finance Reports (Data Central) website below:
https://datacentral.ksde.gov/default.aspx

- Assessed Valuation
- Cash Balances
- Headcount Enrollment
- Mill Levies
- Personnel (Certified/Non-Certified)
- Salary Reports

Kansas Building Report Card website below:
http://ksreportcard.ksde.gov/

- Attendance Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Dropout Rate
- School Violence
- Assessments
    - Reading
    - Mathematics
    - Writing
- Graduates Passing Adv. Science Courses
- Graduates Passing Adv. Math Courses

Accountability Reports website below:
https://datacentral.ksde.gov/accountability.aspx

- Performance Accountability Reports
- Financial Accountability Reports
- Longitudinal Achievement Reports