



***“Removing Hurdles to Break Barriers – One Whole Child at a Time!”***

**December 8, 2025**

As the first semester draws to a close, I wanted to share key highlights, progress, and plans for next semester regarding our strategic plan. Our district is dedicated to "Removing Hurdles to Break Barriers" and focusing on the "ONE WHOLE CHILD AT A TIME!" across academic, mental, physical, social/emotional, and civic engagement areas.

### ***Enrollment & Support Trends***

- Enrollment: Our district has seen steady enrollment, with 856 total students on “count day” for the 2025-2026 school year. The district had an enrollment study completed last Spring. This study included future enrollment predictions. We are currently above the predicted enrollment by 3 students, which means the predictions have been accurate and on target to date. This is important to monitor as we plan for future academic and facility needs.
- IEP Trend Data: The number of students supported through an Individualized Education Program (IEPs) continues to grow in USD 289. Currently, we have 195 students receiving IEP support. The number of students needing support in this manner continues to grow in USD 289 and is higher today than at any time over the last 10 years.
- At-Risk Students: The percentage of at-risk students in USD 289 is 26.64%. This number also continues to grow and is higher today than at any time over the last 10 years.

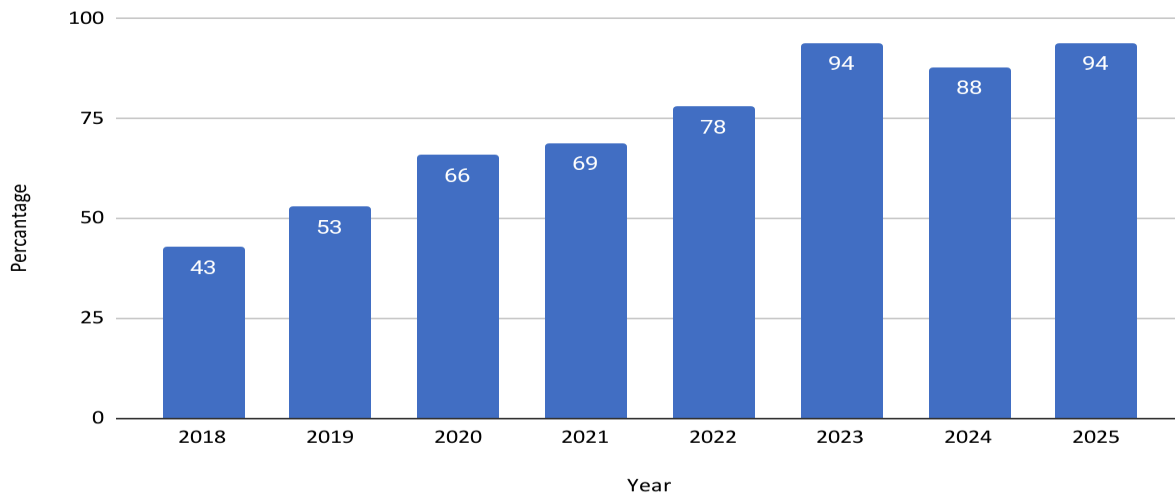
### ***Academic Success Highlights***

WHS continues to excel in preparing students for their futures:

- Graduation Rate: The WHS Graduation Rate for 2025 was 100%.
- Postsecondary Outcomes: A remarkable 94% of 2025 graduates achieved one of the district outcomes. This is substantial growth from 43% just six years ago. These outcomes ensure students are ready for the workforce or postsecondary training.

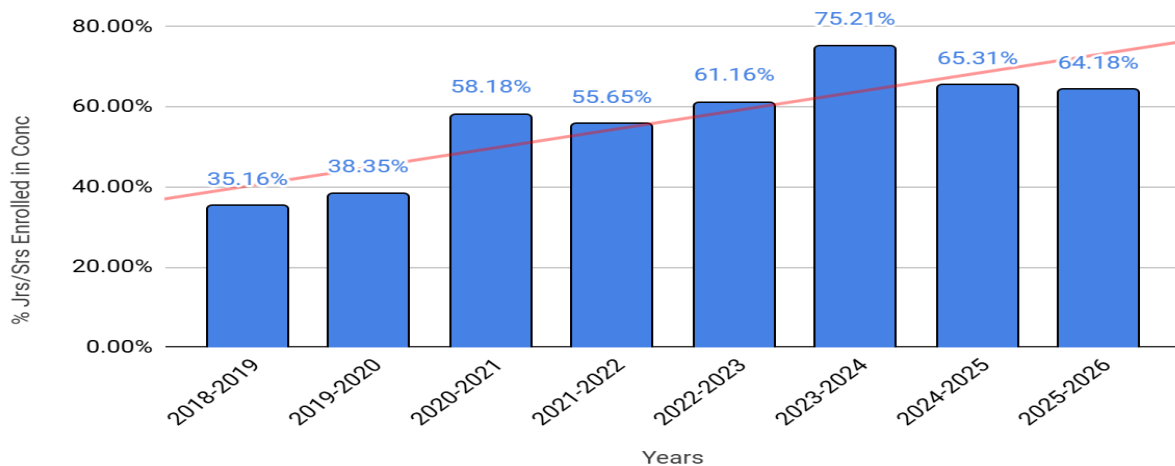
- *District Outcomes Include:* ACT score of 21, 12 or more college hours, an Industry-Recognized Certificate, a Workkeys Certificate, or Acceptance into the military.

Graduation Outcomes: Percentage of students achieving one outcome



- Dual Credit Enrollment: Currently, 64% of WHS juniors and seniors are enrolled in a dual credit course. This allows students to take technical or college courses aligned with their career passions while in high school, which is cost-effective for families. (Anything above 50% is very good).

% Jrs/Srs Enrolled in Dual Credit Courses



- Career Pathways: WHS offers students 12 different Career Pathways and 74 Certification Programs. Our counseling department works hard to find programs for students, even if their specific career interest is not currently offered.

## ***Certificates Available***

|                                         |                                             |                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>CNA/CMA</i></b>                   | <b><i>Welding</i></b>                       | <b><i>Food Science</i></b>                      |
| <b><i>Dietary Manager</i></b>           | <b><i>HVAC</i></b>                          | <b><i>Ag- Livestock Management</i></b>          |
| <b><i>EMT</i></b>                       | <b><i>Electrical</i></b>                    | <b><i>Agribusiness</i></b>                      |
| <b><i>Phlebotomy</i></b>                | <b><i>Cabinet/Millwork</i></b>              | <b><i>Ag- Agronomy</i></b>                      |
| <b><i>Medical Coding</i></b>            | <b><i>Carpentry</i></b>                     | <b><i>Ag Productions</i></b>                    |
| <b><i>Medical Office Asst</i></b>       | <b><i>Certified Productins Tech</i></b>     | <b><i>Sustainable Agriculture</i></b>           |
| <b><i>Pharmacy Tech</i></b>             | <b><i>Construction Management</i></b>       | <b><i>Horticulture</i></b>                      |
| <b><i>Medical Office Specialist</i></b> | <b><i>Industrial Engineering Tech</i></b>   | <b><i>Solar PV</i></b>                          |
| <b><i>Health Information System</i></b> | <b><i>Plumbing</i></b>                      | <b><i>Renewable Energy</i></b>                  |
| <b><i>Dental Assisting</i></b>          | <b><i>Sterile Processing</i></b>            | <b><i>Wind Technology</i></b>                   |
| <b><i>Personal Training</i></b>         | <b><i>Engineering Drafting</i></b>          | <b><i>Veterinary Office Asst</i></b>            |
| <b><i>Automotive</i></b>                | <b><i>Comp Machine Tool Engineering</i></b> | <b><i>Business Technology</i></b>               |
| <b><i>Auto Collision Repair</i></b>     | <b><i>Design</i></b>                        | <b><i>Business Management</i></b>               |
| <b><i>Diesel Tech</i></b>               | <b><i>Animation-Entertainment</i></b>       | <b><i>Acct Asst</i></b>                         |
| <b><i>Culinary Arts</i></b>             | <b><i>Game Art Design</i></b>               | <b><i>Data Analytics</i></b>                    |
| <b><i>Child Development</i></b>         | <b><i>Desktop Publishing App</i></b>        | <b><i>Entrepreneurship</i></b>                  |
| <b><i>Early Childhood</i></b>           | <b><i>Multimedia/Video Prod</i></b>         | <b><i>Microsoft Office</i></b>                  |
| <b><i>Criminal Justice</i></b>          | <b><i>Graphics Tech</i></b>                 | <b><i>Paralegal</i></b>                         |
| <b><i>Homeland Security</i></b>         | <b><i>Recording Arts</i></b>                | <b><i>Legal Administrative Asst</i></b>         |
| <b><i>Police Science</i></b>            |                                             | <b><i>Office Asst</i></b>                       |
| <b><i>Corrections</i></b>               |                                             | <b><i>Bookkeeping</i></b>                       |
| <b><i>Computer Program Design</i></b>   |                                             | <b><i>Leadership Studies</i></b>                |
| <b><i>Computer Applications</i></b>     |                                             | <b><i>Interior Staging</i></b>                  |
| <b><i>Computer Network Support</i></b>  |                                             | <b><i>Interior Design Asst</i></b>              |
| <b><i>Cybersecurity</i></b>             |                                             | <b><i>Floral Design</i></b>                     |
| <b><i>Digital Design</i></b>            |                                             | <b><i>Kitchen and Bath Design</i></b>           |
| <b><i>Web Design</i></b>                |                                             | <b><i>Visual Merchandising &amp; Design</i></b> |
| <b><i>Cloud Certificate</i></b>         |                                             |                                                 |



- ACT Scores: Wellsville's 2024-2025 composite ACT score was 21.4, which is higher than the State average of 19.2 and higher than all league and other area schools.
- Kansas Can Star Awards: USD 289 was recognized through the Kansas Can Star Recognition Program, which represents the highest level of achievement on State Board outcomes.
  - Gold: Graduation Rate
  - Bronze: Individual Plan of Study
  - Copper: Post Secondary Success

| Category            | USD 289  | State of KS |
|---------------------|----------|-------------|
| Attendance Rate     | 94%      | 93.1%       |
| Chronic Absenteeism | 14.2%    | 19.8%       |
| \$ per pupil        | \$14,675 | \$14,994    |

Our attendance rate is 94% which is above the State of KS average. Our chronic absenteeism is lower (the lower the better) than the State of KS average, and we are spending less money per pupil than the State of KS average to accomplish these outcomes.

### Strategic Plan Goals and Progress

The areas of focus for this goal for the 2025-2026 school year are as follows:

- Continued implementation of USD 289 Strategic Plan
  - Continued emphasis on K-5 Literacy Initiative
  - Early Learning: Investing in early learning is critical. We currently have four teachers (8 sections) in our PreK program, which is up from 2 teachers and four sections just a few years ago.
  - Teaching and Learning: We are on track to meet the 1-Year target for the budget emphasis on implementing high-quality instructional materials and professional development aligned to state standards and structured literacy.
- HIIPS Framework for Learning and Instructional Practices
- Responsiveness to Data
- Progressing in USD 289 Measurable Outcomes

Work regarding the literacy initiative began last Spring and is still ongoing. Staff are currently working with TASN. Adoption of a new K-5 literacy curriculum is expected to be completed this Spring. We have also aligned our KESA (School Improvement) goals to this work as well. Our feedback from KESA staff and visiting teams has been very positive in this area. Staff have also been working to be certified in LETRS training - 75% of elementary teachers have either started or completed the training at this time. This work is critical as we work to move the needle in K-3 literacy outcomes and student performance. While we have made great progress this year, this work will be ongoing. It was not meant to be a one-and-done initiative and should continue in future years.

Teachers have continued to receive training regarding HIIPS strategies and the learning framework. These are research-based strategies that improve instructional practices and student outcomes. Administrators have received additional training this year, specific to how we review and use data to drive instructional changes that are best for students. This will be happening at the teacher level as well in the next few months. We must regularly review student performance data and make changes and adjustments when and where necessary at the classroom level. We have also worked to build administrative and teacher leadership capacity through enhanced leadership development programs.

In terms of both teacher retention and best instructional practices, we surveyed teachers regarding initiatives they felt responsible for each day. I was very happy to see that each initiative teachers mentioned was either a part of everyday teaching duties or was directly aligned to the strategic plan. We want to be cognizant of what we are putting on their plate and ensure that it is related to the strategic plan (district/building goals).

The Facilities Planning Committee met in November. The committee reviewed committee recommendations from November 2024, the enrollment study, and the most recent facilities audit. The committee provided initial feedback for priority items to be considered in the next 3, 5, and 10 years. The committee will meet again in the Spring/Summer 2026. This is important work as we want to ensure that our facilities support student learning and capacity at the appropriate levels.

### **Fiscal Responsibility and Savings**

The district has realized significant savings through efficient operational changes.

- Total Annual Savings: The district has achieved \$147,120 in total annual savings by:
  - \$20,000 in annual electrical costs from LED lighting upgrades.
  - \$10,120 annually by switching trash providers.
  - \$7,000 annually by moving the E-rate filing in-house.
  - \$8,000 annually by moving technology software in-house.
- One-Time Savings: A Chromebook Grant resulted in a one-time savings of \$120,000.
- Salaries/Compensation: Approximately 74.6% of the new money breakdown for FY 26 (GF and LOB) is dedicated to Salaries/Compensation in USD 289. Another 16.8% went to our Special Education costs, which is essentially staff salaries. ***This means that approximately 90% of the district's new money this year was dedicated to increasing staff salaries and compensation.***

## **Next semester**

- We will continue the work mentioned above.
  - WES systems for literacy and student behavior.
  - Reduce the number of students in Level 1(state assessment)
  - Continued implementation of the USD 289 Strategic Plan
  - Responsive to Data
  - Continued implementation of Research-based Best Practices (HIPPS)
- We will be evaluating student screen time. This includes reviewing recent studies on the topic, including the KSDE Blue Ribbon task force on student screen time (Chromebooks and cell phones). We will be using the Strategic Planning Committee, the technology committee, and possibly the site council meetings to engage stakeholders in this important discussion.
- The district will be evaluating the feasibility of providing in-town transportation to and from school.

## **Board Meeting Highlights**

In an effort to increase district communications, we are now publishing monthly board meeting highlights. These documents provide highlights and information in a summary format for those not able to attend the meeting in person. The meeting minutes are still available as well via the district website. The monthly board meeting highlights can be found [HERE](#).

## **News and Announcements**

USD 289 news and announcements are posted on a variety of platforms. These begin with the district website and school app. You can download the district app by going to the district website and going to the bottom of the page, and clicking on the App Store or Google Play link. On both the website and app, the live feed section is a running tab of all the announcements, updates, etc. You can also contact the office in the building your child attends to be notified by text, email, phone, etc. Don't forget to check out the district and elementary Facebook pages for fun pictures of student learning and activities.

***It's A Great Day to Be An Eagle!***