



Observer Corps Report

Observer: Jane Skinner

Meeting Observed: Knox Co. Board of Education - Regular Meeting

Meeting Date: 2/5/26

[Agenda](#)

[Video Recording](#)

Three Main Observations:

1. Dr. Wilson led the Reward School presentations, where 18 schools were recognized for strong performance in student achievement and academic growth of all student groups. Reward School designation is the highest designation a school can receive.
2. Vice Chair Wright shared a legislative update saying since Legislators did not meet all last week due to winter storms, when they resumed session on Monday, 500-600 bills dropped (were filed) this week. TSBA (TN School Board Association) has an education bill tracker.
3. KCS staff presented on Powell area capacity challenges and opportunities, ultimately suggesting rezoning of Powell Elementary students to shift capacity to other area elementary schools.

Feature Evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Meeting started on time?	X		Templeton left at 5:25 p.m.
All members present?	X		
Members attentive?	X		
Did members come prepared to discuss agenda items?	X		
Agenda posted 72 hours prior to meeting?	X		
Agenda items clearly described what was to be discussed?	X		

Adequate opportunity given for public input?	X		
Was there an appearance that some action items were discussed in closed rather than open session?		X	
Was background information available to the public?	X		
Facilities adequate (room size, lighting, ventilation, speakers, audible, ADA accessible)?	X		

Were there any issues on the agenda relevant to LWV positions or programs? View the League's [National](#), [State](#), and [LWVKKC](#) policy positions.

LWVKKC Policy Positions: Childcare, Land Use, Health, Homeless/Mentally Ill Persons, Urban Forestry, Use of School Facilities by Communities, Teacher Recruitment & Retention

League Position	Issue

Do you recommend League action on any of these issues?

Other notes/concerns?

Powell Presentation

Dr. Adams

Challenges at Powell Elementary

- Limited capacity
- Congested traffic patterns
- Limited parking at the school

Ms. Lautner

Explained how KCS evaluates school capacity, and how schools are funded.

- In past 10 years, KCS enrollment decreased by 1429 students (district wide)
- School construction/improvements are capital expenditures funded thru Knox Co. debt service, which comes out of the general purpose budget.
- When more funds are spent on school improvements, leaves less money in the pot for salary increases, instructional materials and technology.

- KCS built 5 new schools; will build 3 more
- 2024 big bump – due to change to TISSA model from BEP – used this savings to pay down the debt allowing money to go towards something else.
- In 2028, debt is expected to increase.
- Capacity issues addressed in 3 ways: rezone (most cost-effective option), addition to the existing building or new build (most expensive alternative).
- Rezone selected for Powell – immediate solution, fiscally responsible, eliminates the need for portables, relieves traffic congestion, and addresses parking concerns. Will also strengthen feeder school patterns.

Mr. Dillingham

Described the rezoning consideration to relieve capacity issues at Powell Elementary. More students currently enrolled at Powell Elementary would be rezoned to Amherst & Brickley McCloud.

- Making decisions based on enrollment projections through 2030

Ms. Lautner explained Next Steps

- Feb. Community Meeting (no date shared) to collect input
- March Board Meeting rezoning proposal shared, incorporating community input gathered.

Public Forum (2 speakers)

Teresa Baugh – Special Ed – KCS needs to hire one, full-time, board-certified music therapist.

Laura Bean Allen – ELL teacher at Fulton. KCS comments about ICE created fear and confusion among students and families, resulting in attendance issues. Aware of one current student and 2 previous students taken, and several family members. She requests - clarification of protections of students' information. Share clear message and information to reduce families fear of sending their children to school. More counselors available who speak Spanish.