



USD 497 News Release

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Administrative Announcement: Director of Equity and Student and Family Engagement



Interim Superintendent Dr. Jeanice Kerr Swift announces the selection of Lawrence Free State High School Assistant Principal Tina Mitchell as director of equity and student and family engagement, effective July 1, 2025. Mitchell is completing her 14th year at Free State, three as assistant principal and eleven as a school counselor.

Our district leadership team worked with school board officers and the Equity Advisory Committee to redesign this leadership position to meet district goals around culturally responsive systems and to support the current needs of students and families. Mitchell will help define, evaluate, and analyze the effectiveness of family engagement initiatives on student learning, academic success, attendance, and family participation. Working in collaboration with parents and guardians, she will lead efforts to develop meaningful engagement to support education, social services, health, disabilities, and volunteer activities.

“We are excited to welcome Tina Mitchell as the director of equity and student and family engagement. She brings to this role an impressive combination of commitment and expertise in inclusive practice at the individual, team, and organizational level, as well as proven experience with the day-to-day work to support students and staff, engage families, and effectuate organizational change,” said Dr. Swift.

“We welcome to our district administrative team the addition of Ms. Mitchell, a leader who will enhance this critical effort, and we are ready to move forward together. I am especially grateful to the staff and community members who gave of their time to contribute to this selection process. We look forward to this next great chapter in the Lawrence Public Schools.” Swift said.

Prior to joining Free State’s team, Mitchell supported students as a counselor at West Middle School for five years and a district prevention specialist for all four Lawrence middle schools for six years. Her previous experience includes serving as a social worker for five years in Olathe, a therapist and crisis interventionist for two years in Kansas City, Kansas, and a paraeducator for three years at Schwegler Elementary School. Mitchell earned a bachelor’s degree at KU and master’s degrees at KU and Emporia State University.

“I am honored to transition from my role at Free State to a director position for the district. It has been a privilege to support the students, staff, and families at Free State, and I look forward to continuing that commitment on a broader scale. This new opportunity excites me, and I am eager to collaborate in ways that enhance our schools and strengthen our community. I am truly grateful for the support and experiences that have shaped my journey, and I look forward to the work ahead,” said Mitchell.

Our district will immediately begin a search to fill the assistant principal position at Free State.