



Information, Guidance & Recommendations Regarding COVID-19 Response: 03/16/20

With the safety of students, staff, and the community guiding everything we do, organizations representing the majority of public education stakeholders in Kansas are working to provide advice and guidance to our members.

As circumstances change from one hour to the next, the need to exercise flexibility while working with a collaborative spirit is paramount. Together, we are developing out-of-the-box, common-sense strategies that serve the best interest of Kansas students.

Our process of discovery is occurring at a moment of crisis, and our collective response will be a model for our students. Our organizations offer the following recommendations as we work together to ensure that our efforts are practical, effective and that our students benefit.

- The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, along with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, county health departments, and the Kansas State Department of Education, are the organizations we all must look to regarding school closures, threat assessment, and criteria for resuming normal activities.
- School districts are asked to communicate to all their employees the restrictions regarding employee access to district facilities.
- Data used to inform decisions is critical, and educators may expect school, district, and state leaders to solicit feedback via digital surveys on a variety of key issues in the coming days and weeks.
- All district employees should follow the recommendations of the KDHE and the CDC relative to closures. When called upon to isolate and maintain limited contact, follow those directives.
- The contracts between employers and employees should be honored regarding pay, benefits, and duties during closures and work stoppages. Agreements relating to how these contracts will be fulfilled should be openly communicated and transparent to all parties involved.
- All district employees at every level should monitor established communications channels for information and instructions regarding changes in circumstances that may impact duty. These channels should be accessible, and together employees and the district should establish a regular monitoring schedule (i.e., morning, lunch, evening).



- As circumstances change and logistical needs change, district boards of education and the leaders of the local bargaining unit should work together with the flexibility needed to develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) relating to temporary adjustments in contract language. Additionally, all parties should understand that there will be a time to push the 'reset' button and return to the full obligations of employment contracts.
- Under the leadership of the Commissioner of Education, teachers, administrators, school board representatives, and patrons are convening now to bring forth recommendations rooted in best-practices to provide innovative strategies for delivering instruction to Kansas students along with needed training for educators.
- School closures may look a bit different from district to district. In some cases, district personnel may be required to report for work when students are not. In all cases, those decisions should be informed by the KDHE and in the best interest of student and staff safety.
- There may be short notice of school gearing back up or staff reporting for duty. District employees should be ready to return to work within 48-hour notice and refrain from activities that would make returning to work difficult. In some cases, returning to work may look different than it has previously. Specifically, temporary adjustments to duty schedules may be necessary and should be determined collaboratively. District employees should be prepared to report for duty.

During our time of need, working collaboratively with flexibility among all stakeholders will keep us moving forward to provide the best learning opportunity possible for Kansas students. The global pandemic impacts all citizens, and how we respond will serve as an example to future generations. Focusing our efforts on safety for all, we will overcome the challenges in front of us and emerge stronger for the future.