



**USD 232 BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**OFFICIAL MINUTES -- SPECIAL MEETING**

USD 232 Administrative Office, 35200 W 91st Street, De Soto, KS  
YouTube channel: <https://bitly.com/usd232youtube>

October 18, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Board President, Danielle Heikes. A quorum of the Board was present. Board members and administrators present were as follows:

**Board Members:** Rick Amos (*participated via Zoom*)  
Bill Fletcher  
John Gagnat  
Danielle Heikes  
Stephanie Makalous  
Ashley Spaulding  
Rachele Zade

**Administrators:** Alvie Cater, Assistant Superintendent of Administration & Communications  
Steve Deghand, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities & Operations  
Wendy Denham, Board Clerk/Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
Carrie Handy, Executive Director of Elementary Education  
Tara Harmon-Moore, Coordinator of Health Services  
Dr. Frank Harwood, Superintendent  
Rob Moser, Coordinator of Safety & Transportation  
Brian Schwanz, Executive Director of Secondary Education

Alvie Cater led attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and then shared the following information relating to the Test to Stay & Learn program with the Board:

**Background**

Test to Stay & Learn is a K-12 testing program provided by the Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE). KDHE was awarded a federal cooperative agreement of \$87 million of which \$74 million was designated for COVID-19 testing in school districts. It provides an option to help keep students and staff in school.

At the August 2<sup>nd</sup> Board of Education meeting the board approved mitigation protocols to include voluntary testing. KDHE approved a grant for USD 232 to do Test to Stay in late September.

KDHE designed the following testing strategies for districts to consider:

- USD 232 currently offers Test to Know (Diagnostic Testing) – This testing is funded by KDHE through its own purchasing or contracts with other vendors. There is no direct funding or reimbursement to USD 232 for diagnostic testing.
- USD 232 is prepared to offer Test to Stay & Learn – Test kits/services for this program are funded by KDHE through its own purchasing or contracts with other vendors. There is no direct funding or reimbursement to USD 232 for test kits/services.

Information on a grant offered by KDHE which will reimburse for the current school year only:

- Up to \$350,000 for this hiring of five staff members to support Test to Stay (the district budgeted for registered nurses).
- The staff hired do not have to be registered nurses.
- USD 232 currently has 1.5 staff hired.
- USD 232 is advertising for 3.5 positions (CNAs, medical assistants, LPNs and RNs).
- The district is exploring the possibility of utilizing MAWD for Test to Stay to provide an all-inclusive service; with costs covered by KDHE.
- Supplies & Equipment that can be purchased with grant funds:
  - Up to \$5,650 for masks, gloves, face shields (PPE).
  - UP to \$70 for office supplies.
  - UP to \$1,000 for any furniture needed for clinical spaces.
  - UP to \$8,000 for portable air purification systems, filters if needed. Mr. Cater pointed out that all of the HVAC systems in USD 232 are modernized and move air much more effectively than a portable air purification system would (the air is turned over up to eight times/hour).

#### Test to Stay & Learn Strategy

- Voluntary COVID-19 testing strategy.
- Available to all school districts in Kansas.
- Free, daily testing for students who are identified as close contacts by the Johnson County Department of Health & Environment (JCDHE).
- Helps keep students in school and activities.
- Parental consent is required (facilitated through Skyward and will include Spanish).
- BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests (15 minutes).
- Serial antigen testing (recurring testing) increases sensitivity to determine the presence of COVID-19, versus a single rapid antigen test.
- Seven (7) days of testing; may be fewer days depending on last known date of exposure.

- Masks are required during the Test to Stay window; medical mask exemptions and protocols for sports/activities (may remove mask when actively participating) are recommended to apply.

### Curbside Testing to Start

- Before the start of the school day; 6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.
- Central Location – Cedar Trails Exploration Center, 8201 Mize Blvd, Lenexa, KS.
- Utilize existing nurses to assist.
- Working on inclement weather plan for indoor testing.

Mr. Cater shared a map of the planned curbside testing site at the Cedar Trails Exploration Center.

### Testing Process

- Notify parents of students who are identified as being exposed to COVID-19 of option regarding Test to Stay.
- Same Day Testing:
  - Check-in (confirm name and date of birth).
  - Testing (wait 15 minutes for result).
  - Discharge:
    - Negative Result – proceed with school day and activities.
    - Positive Result – The district will offer a voluntary PCR lab test to confirm; the individual will be excluded from school until result of the PCR test is known. If the test is confirmed positive, the county health department would look back at the previous 24 hours for any contact tracing that may be necessary.

### Exploring the use of MAWD

MAWD is a Kansas City-based provider of pathology and laboratory services in the region that has been working with KDHE. The company started testing for COVID-19 in March 2020 for states, businesses, hospitals, healthcare providers and school districts in the region.

Benefits for USD232 if the district can utilize services of MAWD for Test to Stay:

- MAWD is all-inclusive (there will be no need to hire new staff).
- PCR lab tests are used instead of antigen tests; they follow the same testing window.
- Same-day results.
- As long as student/staff don't have symptoms, they would continue normal school attendance/activities until the result is known. The goal is to have the result by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the test.

- MAWD services would be funded by KDHE.

Mr. Cater said based on information he received today it looked like MAWD might be the best option.

Mr. Cater opened the floor for board discussion.

Stephanie Makalous asked when the testing could start if the district goes with MAWD. Mr. Cater said he didn't know when they could start, but said the district could possibly begin tomorrow with current staff and then transition to MAWD.

Ashley Spaulding asked if a student identified as a close contact during the school day would be sent home or if the student could remain in class. Mr. Cater said if the student is without symptoms he/she can remain in class and start the Test to Stay program the following morning, as long as testing is within 24 hours.

President Heikes asked what the current protocol is if a student is identified as a close contact. Mr. Cater said currently the student would be excluded.

Ashley Spaulding asked what the plan was to enforce masking during testing if the board moves to optional masking. Superintendent Harwood said if the student doesn't follow the process they would no longer be eligible for Test to Stay and would be excluded from the building.

Ashley Spaulding and President Heikes asked if teachers would be informed of who is participating in the Test to Stay program. Mr. Cater said the school nurse and building administrator would be made aware, but not beyond that.

Rachele Zade asked if current nurses were going to assist with testing. Mr. Cater said they were asked to volunteer and will be compensated for additional time worked.

Rachele Zade said if a test came back positive would the PCR lab test be done right then. Mr. Cater said a PCR test would be made available and would be sent to the lab that same day.

Ashley Spaulding asked if vaccinated individuals identified as coming into close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 would have to participate in Test to Stay. Mr. Cater said if an individual volunteers that they are vaccinated they would not be recommended for quarantine.

President Heikes asked if an individual has symptoms and is tested if the PCR test would be administered automatically. Mr. Cater said it would be offered.

Ashley Spaulding asked if there would be a cut-off for the morning test window. Mr. Cater said 7:45 a.m. would be the last test administered. Superintendent Harwood said the district would encourage

secondary students to come between 6:30 – 7:15 and then elementary students 7:00 – 7:45 to avoid tardiness.

Stephanie Makalous asked if there are any limitations if a student wants to come and get tested every Monday. Mr. Cater said the district does not believe there are adequate staff or resources to do that at this time.

President Heikes asked if MAWD would take over after the district starts the program. Mr. Cater said yes, with support from the 1.5 staff members the district has already hired.

Rick Amos asked if the same testing window would apply if the district moved to MAWD; and if there were any other districts using MAWD. Mr. Cater said the testing window should stay the same. He also said he has been told that Blue Valley would be starting use of MAWD November 1<sup>st</sup> and Shawnee Mission might be doing some variation of testing with MAWD.

Superintendent Harwood recapped where the board stood at the last meeting:

- High Schools are the only buildings where all individuals are eligible to get vaccinated and are not subject to current Johnson County mask orders. This makes the high schools the most reasonable place to start.
  - Barrier face masks will still be required on all district-provided transportation.
  - Barrier face masks will be required at CTEC-CAPS if either high school is requiring masks.
- Establishing a metric that would reinstate the requirement for barrier face masks will help limit large numbers of students being excluded due to COVID-19 isolations and quarantines.
  - The district has averaged less than 1% of students being excluded per week for recommended quarantine and isolation.
  - With any communicable disease, when a building reaches 10% absenteeism, considerations are made for temporary closure.
  - With an average daily attendance of 96%, 4% of students are typically absent.
  - Reinstating a barrier face mask requirement when exclusions for isolation and quarantine reach 4% in a building would reduce the chance of building closures.
- If the mask requirement is reinstated, it should stay in place for a least two weeks. Keeping required masks in place until the exclusion for quarantine and isolation are below 2% for two consecutive weeks will help reduce the need to immediately go back to requiring masks.

President Heikes asked if the district would maintain the Dashboard. Superintendent Harwood said it would, but may change the date of updating it to Fridays instead of Wednesdays.

Stephanie Makalous said she was ready to make masks optional for high school students because they do have the option to be vaccinated.

President Heikes said she wanted to discuss timing in order to allow families time to prepare and discuss. She proposed that the district begin optional masking for high school students on Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ashley Spaulding said she agreed with Mrs. Makalous and President Heikes. She said she the Board needs to do this gradually by starting with the high schools and not discuss elementary and middle schools yet.

Rachele Zade said at the last board meeting the board agreed if the district had Test to Stay they would make masks optional for high schools. She said she would support beginning on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

President Heikes asked that it be documented that signage in the district would not be changed immediately if the Board begins Test to Stay on October 19<sup>th</sup>. She said she would be monitoring the data provided by the district weekly. She asked who would decide to reinstate the barrier face mask requirement if exclusion and isolation quarantines reach 4%. Superintendent Harwood said he would be the one to make the decision and then it would be communicated with the building.

Bill Fletcher said if the district is ready he would support making masks optional at the high schools beginning October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Rachele Zade asked if the district was ready. Superintendent Harwood said the district could make it work, but if the board is looking at starting as soon as possible with communication he would recommend a start on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Mrs. Stephanie Makalous moved to make barrier face masks optional starting October 20, 2021, in buildings serving grades 9-12 if the weekly percentage of recommended quarantines and isolations is below 4% of a building's student enrollment. If the percentage of recommended quarantines and isolations is greater than 4%, barrier face masks will be required as they are in other USD 232 buildings for at least two weeks and the percentage of recommended quarantines and isolations is less than 2% for two consecutive weeks.*

*Mr. John Gagnat seconded.*

*Carried 7/0.*

Rachele Zade said the board has received emails from parents about elementary children struggling with masks. She asked that the board begin discussion on making masks optional for elementary and middle school students.

Stephanie Makalous said she would like to see the district take it one step at a time and maybe start discussion on elementary students once they are eligible for vaccination.

President Heikes agreed with Mrs. Makalous. She said the district doesn't have enough data at this time on elementary and middle school students and pointed out that the county mandate does apply to grades K-6.

Rick Amos said this is a great start and agreed that discussions on elementary and middle school masking needed to begin soon.

Bill Fletcher said the district should pay close attention to the data the next two weeks.

*President Heikes adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.*

11/1/2021  
Date Approved

Melody S. Benham  
Clerk, Board of Education  
Carulla Heikes  
President, Board of Education