



USD 232 BOARD OF EDUCATION
OFFICIAL MINUTES --SPECIAL MEETING

YouTube channel: <https://bitly.com/usd232youtube>

November 23, 2020

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

Board Members:

Rick Amos – via Zoom
Bill Fletcher – via Zoom
John Gaignat – via Zoom
Danielle Heikes – via Zoom
Stephanie Makalous – via Zoom
Ashley Spaulding – via Zoom
Rachele Zade – via Zoom

Administrators:

Alvie Cater, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative & Educational Services
Wendy Denham, Board Clerk/Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Frank Harwood, Superintendent

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Heikes noted this meeting was called to discuss and possibly act on allowing spectators to attend school activities and events. She also said the Board received 53 patron comments electronically.

Superintendent Harwood said that within the current Gating Criteria approved by the Board in August, when the district is in the Orange category spectators-audience for school events are limited to Remote Access only; however, he reminded the Board that they excluded sports and activities from the approved Gating Criteria. Dr. Harwood said the Johnson County Board of Public Health issued an order on November 13th that includes a recommendation for spectators at youth events. He pointed out that although activities governed by the Kansas State High School Athletic Association (KSHSAA) and boards of education are exempt from the order, it is recommended that the order is followed at a minimum. The recommendation in the order is that spectators be limited to a maximum of two attendees per participant, with physical distancing and mass gathering provisions from the order in place. Mass gathering provisions are: occupancy limited to 50 people or 50% of the capacity of the space whichever is less, 6 feet of social distancing is required between individuals that do not reside together and masks are required at all times while indoors. Superintendent Harwood then shared an example of how the Kansas Schools Gating Criteria that was approved by the Board can be modified

to accommodate these recommendations. He also let the Board know how a pending resolution to be voted upon by the KSHSAA board could affect events, activities and spectators.

Stephanie Makalous asked for an example of things that do not fall under the purview of KSHSAA. Superintendent Harwood said high school choir concerts held in December and plays would be examples. He shared some of their mitigation plans.

Ashley Spaulding asked what the district's ability was to livestream all activities. Superintendent Harwood said main gyms in both high schools have the capability and the technology staff is working with middle school principals to make sure they have necessary equipment. Alvie Cater, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative & Educational Services, said staff are working to make this a good experience under the circumstances.

Stephanie Makalous asked if middle school events could be held at the high schools. Superintendent Harwood said early in the season it might be possible, but later in the season scheduling could be a problem.

Rick Amos asked if the auxiliary gyms were set up to livestream. Superintendent Harwood said each of the high schools would have plenty of equipment to run a livestream in the auxiliary gyms if necessary.

Superintendent Harwood noted that if the Board does decide to adopt the recommendation it would only affect basketball and wrestling. Danielle Heikes asked if cheer/dance would be affected. Superintendent Harwood said cheer and dance participants would also have a two ticket allowance, but noted that they will only be performing during the basketball games.

Ashley Spaulding said one of her biggest concerns is social distancing. She noted a lack of social distancing at some of the Fall sports. She asked if the district would have the ability to tape off or mark where people can sit. Superintendent Harwood said the schools can certainly do this and noted that masks and social distancing would be strictly enforced with folks asked to leave if they don't follow the rules. Mrs. Spaulding asked if the district has to follow any requirement for medical exemptions for masks. Superintendent Harwood said that since the district is offering an option by livestreaming he believed the district should be able to require a mask, but will seek advice from the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB) Legal Department on the matter.

Stephanie Makalous said her concern was with having to shut down schools due in part to not having adequate staff, but allowing spectators at sports. She said by having spectators it creates an opportunity for exposure.

Danielle Heikes asked about emergency protocol if parents are not on the grounds when a catastrophic event happens. Superintendent Harwood said if there was a serious injury the district

would first call 911 and then call the parents. He also noted that schools are prepared as serious injuries may occur during practice and away competitions.

Rick Amos asked if the district could provide livestreaming at no cost to families. Superintendent Harwood noted the district could provide livestreaming without a cost, but the fee charged to view events on the NFHS network (De Soto High School) is similar to admission charged for events. Mr. Amos asked if the district has a feel for how many home events across the schools will happen in the winter season. Dr. Harwood said for middle school it's just the girls' basketball season. He noted the largest event would be the Huhtamaki basketball tournament at De Soto High School.

Bill Fletcher asked what action the Board approved at its last meeting. Superintendent Harwood said current gating criteria indicates no spectators at all. Mr. Fletcher asked if people who get the vaccine or have had COVID-19 could be exempted. Superintendent Harwood said it will be awhile before enough vaccinations get distributed and this has not been considered.

Ashley Spaulding asked if there would be concessions. Superintendent Harwood said the schools already decided to not offer concessions. He also noted the district does not allow outside food and drink.

Rachele Zade pointed out that the Board decided older students would be staying at home, but things like sporting tournaments and parking lots at retailers are full. Superintendent Harwood noted that these are not things the Board can control and could be contributing to the rise in COVID numbers. Mrs. Zade said it just doesn't seem logical that so much is going on in the community and the Board has to make decisions like this.

President Heikes said public health officials have done a disservice to local school boards by not making stricter rules for the public. She noted she comes back to the Gating Criteria, but feels the district could safely allow up to two spectators per participant.

Ashley Spaulding agreed with President Heikes and Mrs. Makalous. She said a large part of the decision making does not impact sports and spectators. She noted that the community is an absolute mess right now and trending towards red, but added that most of the exposures are because of failure to follow mitigating rules. She said sporting events are an option whereas school isn't. She said she feels like the USD 232 community can do this successfully by following rules as long as they are strictly enforced.

John Gagnat said as long as it can be done safely and the district enforces the rules he felt like allowing two spectators per participant would work.

Rick Amos said he thought Mrs. Spaulding was suggesting the district not allow visiting team spectators into the buildings. He said the Board did take athletics and activities out of the Gating

Criteria and had a successful Fall season. He said no matter what the decision is tonight students will still be able to play and the district will have the opportunity to livestream. He asked if KSHSAA decides to shorten the season and restrict spectators would any decision the Board made tonight be affected. Superintendent Harwood noted that the Board decision goes beyond KSHSAA sponsored activities. Mr. Amos asked if spectators would be allowed at swim meets and bowling tournaments. Dr. Harwood said swimming would be governed by the home team as USD 232 doesn't have swimming facilities and bowling would be governed by rules of the business/bowling alley. Mr. Amos said he would be in support of allowing some spectators. Superintendent Harwood added that there is typically a visiting team administrator that comes with teams to games who USD 232 administrators communicate with on expectations. He said that if the district starts limiting visiting fans it could become an issue with away games.

Danielle Heikes said this will be the third time that the Board has modified the Gating Criteria and cautioned them on making another change.

Rick Amos asked if the district was truly following the Gating Criteria if there would be activities. Superintendent Harwood said if the board were to follow the criteria everything would be remote since the district is in the Orange.

Stephanie Makalous noted that she has had to watch her girls activates over the internet without any issue.

Ashley Spaulding said she was one of the ones who bent the rules in August and pulled activities out of the criteria. She added that she feels this is a very different scenario than the learning environment. She also said that with one ticket per student the district could very easily accommodate spectators.

Bill Fletcher said the district builds gyms that can hold a couple thousand people and basketball and wrestling would have plenty of room to allow two spectators for each participant.

Danielle Heikes said she does understand the Gating Criteria can be modified. She said she doesn't want the perception in the school district to be that activities and sports rank higher than instruction. She said by separating instruction and activities/sports the Board could be setting a dangerous precedent.

Ashley Spaulding said she feels like the district can strictly enforce the rules and maybe set a limit on the number of infractions before saying no spectators are allowed.

Stephanie Makalous said trusting the community is a hard thing to do and she didn't feel it was fair to expect staff to police events.

Bill Fletcher said the a decision on whether or not to allow spectators should be done by the schools' conferences.

Mr. Rick Amos moved to amend the Spectator-Audience portion of the Kansas Schools Gating Criteria adopted by USD 232 in the Orange category as presented, which will allow two spectators per participant.

Mrs. Rachele Zade seconded.

Roll Call Vote:

John Gagnat – Yes

Bill Fletcher – Yes

Rick Amos – Yes

Ashley Spaulding – Yes

Rachele Zade – Yes

Stephanie Makalous – No

Danielle Heikes – No

Carried 5/2.

At the request of President Heikes, Superintendent Harwood again explained how the KSHSAA vote could affect the Board's decision made this evening. For KSHSAA sponsored activities/sports the Board decision will not come into play until February.

Ashley Spaulding clarified that if the district were in the Red category spectators would not be allowed and Superintendent Harwood confirmed.

President Heikes adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

12/7/2020
Date Approved

Wendy S. Genham
Clerk, Board of Education
Danielle Heikes
President, Board of Education