



**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>

September 28, 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  
Bill Fletcher  
John Gagnat  
Danielle Heikes  
Stephanie Makalous  
Ashley Spaulding  
Rachele Zade

**Administrators:** Wendy Denham, Board Clerk/Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
Tara Harmon-Moore, Coordinator of Health Services  
Dr. Frank Harwood, Superintendent  
Brandon Riffel, Director of Technology  
Sam Ruff, Principal, De Soto High School

Led by President Heikes, those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Heikes noted this meeting was called to review the recommendations of the COVID Advisory Committee.

Superintendent Harwood shared a PowerPoint presentation with the following slides: Committee Purpose and Charge, Committee Make-Up, Committee Protocols, Johnson County Mental Health Report, Kansas COVID Workgroup for Kids roles and work, Kansas School Gating Criteria Metrics, Kansas School Gating Criteria – Implementation, USD 232 Data (Student Absenteeism, Quarantines and Isolations as of 9/23/20, Johnson County Two Week Percent Positive/Two Week Incident Rate/ Incidence Rate Trend, and Hospital Capacity), committee Recommendations (which fall in the Yellow category), Committee’s Next Steps, Elementary Learning Environment (strategies to consider to promote full time on-site learning for Pre-K – 5 students), and Board’s Next Steps.

Board members were given an opportunity to ask questions. They asked questions about impact on teachers in the elementary setting with students on-site, difference in diagnosis between elementary students and secondary students, steps taken to mitigate spread of COVID in elementary schools with larger class sizes, thermometer use, and learning environments in area districts.

President Heikes opened the floor for patron input.

The following individuals spoke to the board in support of bringing students back on-site:

Tracy Gervais, Shawnee  
Stan Dohm, Shawnee  
Jarrod McGinnis, De Soto  
Lindsay Billinger, De Soto  
Sally Morrison, Olathe  
Tracy Buckendorf, Shawnee

Tina Darling, Eudora, (a teacher in USD 232) asked the board to consider that maybe what they are doing is right and encouraged them to maintain the current learning environment.

While acknowledging that the Hybrid learning model is challenging, Stephanie Makalous indicated a desire to continue with the current learning environment.

Bill Fletcher said he was in support of bringing all students back full time.

President Heikes said that she is not opposed to bringing elementary students back to full time, but expressed concern about possible quarantines.

Stephanie Makalous suggested going out another month with the Hybrid learning model.

John Gagnat said he would like to bring K-5 students back to school full time and work on getting grades 6 - 12 back soon.

Rachele Zade expressed concern with the social/emotional aspect of students being out of school and didn't see why USD 232 couldn't return to full time on-site learning when other public and private schools are doing it successfully. She said she wasn't sure all students should be brought back immediately, but said the district needed to see about doing it quickly.

Ashley Spaulding said she agreed with comments made about struggles students and parents are having with remote learning but noted that she is not comfortable with bringing back secondary students at this time due to increased risk of COVID transmission to teachers and staff. She said that she is hearing more frustrations from elementary teachers with the Hybrid learning model and is in favor of bringing elementary students back full-time now.

Danielle Heikes reiterated that secondary students are at higher risk of spreading the disease.

Rick Amos also said he is in favor of bringing students back on-site. He suggested the district start with the lowest risk students for disease transmission (elementary). He said the Board has been given a solid recommendation from the committee.

Stephanie Makalous said there is a lot of anxiety about the board making changes to the learning environment and suggested the district stay in the current learning model for a while.

Ashley Spaulding said parents and teachers are at their breaking point with the Hybrid learning model. John Gagnat agreed.

Ashley Spaulding asked what the district will do to help teachers prepare to return to full time on-site learning. She asked if the district could keep everyone remote on Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, for planning and start students full time on-site on Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. Superintendent Harwood said not having students come back until Thursday is what the administration would do, but would still have to look at what needs to be done to have Wednesday count as an instructional day. Mrs. Spaulding suggested the district set very clear expectations for mitigation. She said she had heard high school students don't have seminar and asked if the district could look at adding seminar back into their schedule. Superintendent Harwood said this will be part of the conversation for the next regular board meeting.

President Heikes asked if there are any benefits in delaying re-opening for elementary until after the quarter. Superintendent Harwood said from a disease spread stance there isn't a difference, but shared that more preparation time could be helpful. For First Student the only difference would be routes will be ran on Wednesday and JCPRD understands they will transition back to before/after school care and not offer full day childcare.

In conclusion, President Heikes reminded the board that bringing elementary students back to full time on-site learning could result in quarantines and more parental frustration.

*Mr. Rick Amos moved to accept the recommendation from the Advisory Committee to remain in the Yellow category of the Kansas Schools Gating Criteria with grades Pre-K – 5, transitioning to the On-Site Learning Environment on October 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Mr. Bill Fletcher seconded.*

*Carried 5/2. (Danielle Heikes and Stephanie Makalous dissented)*

*President Heikes adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.*

October 5, 2020  
Date Approved

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