



April Student and Staff Safety Update

Superintendent Report

Monday, April 28, 2025

In Lawrence Public Schools, safety will always be our top priority; this commitment includes responding immediately when concerns arise. As part of our culture of safety, we continually update policies, programs, and training designed to promote child safety and protect students from threats present in our society.

While we have shared a student safety update/connection regularly in Superintendent updates and newsletters, as we near the wrap up of this school year, we want to ensure that we highlight our ongoing work throughout this school year.

Student Safety Practices

Steps we are taking to ensure Student and Staff safety while at school include the following:

Visibility and Line of Sight Expectation for All Students and Staff at all Times

To maintain a safe and well-supervised environment for students and staff and for the protection of everyone, school district team members will ensure clear visibility and line of sight to the area where they are working at all times, avoiding situations where a single staff member is alone with a student in an enclosed space.

During recent months, a comprehensive review of each area of service has been conducted alongside building leaders and members of the Special Education and Facilities and Operations teams to ensure that all areas across schools in the district have been addressed.

In order to support this directive, we will ensure that all windows into classrooms and offices remain uncovered to allow clear visibility at all times.

To maintain safe, open, observable, and well-supervised learning environments:

- **Clear visibility and sight lines to staff and students must be maintained at all times during the delivery of services.**
- **Windows into classrooms, offices, and all other learning spaces must remain uncovered, except during an active security lockdown.**

- **Frequent walkthroughs in schools will continue to ensure compliance with these requirements.**

Line of Sight and ALICE Safety Protocols

During recent Kansas ALICE training, clarification of our district's process has been confirmed, that line of sight will be assured at all times, *except in the rare occurrence when the school is in an active lockdown process*, during which the ALICE safety protocols of covering windows and doors, will be in place.

Lawrence Police Department Review

We are leveraging the expertise and experience of our **Lawrence Police Department team**, including our SROs who are on duty in the district, who will work with building principals and members of the district team to review the room-by-room analysis, clarify any questions, and ensure that the district guideline of 'open line of sight' is consistently achieved.

Prompt Response When Concerns Arise

Our district has the highest standards for our employees, who are entrusted to care for, educate, and support our community's children. When a safety concern is reported, our administrative team immediately investigates, including involving local law enforcement, as appropriate. Based on investigation findings, we take immediate action in accordance with the law and Lawrence Board of Education Policy.

Continuous Review of Safety Practices in Schools

Our district continues its comprehensive review of safety protocols across all schools to enhance safety, security, and visibility. This includes ensuring clear sightlines into all physical spaces where children are served, so these spaces remain open and observable at all times. All student services are to be delivered in clearly visible areas.

Required Fingerprinting & Background Checks

Criminal background checks (Kansas Bureau of Investigations, Department of Children and Families) are required for every district team member, prior to beginning duty. Names are checked against the KBI Registered Offenders Registry. This checks for violent, drug, and sex offenders. Fingerprinting and an FBI background check are conducted for staff members who have not lived in the state of Kansas for the past ten consecutive years,

In addition, a Department for Children and Families background check is completed on the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry for all new employees.

The Kansas Department of Education requires a background check and fingerprinting on all new teacher license applicants. Related-services state licensing agencies also require background checks and/or fingerprinting. License status is reviewed for all certified staff during the application and hiring process.

Mandatory Reporting

All members of our team are mandatory reporters. *Any district employee who has concerns that a child may have experienced harm due to physical, mental, or emotional abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse is required to promptly report the concern to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) office or, if the DCF office is closed, to local law enforcement (Board Policy GAAD).* To support this responsibility, all school employees receive annual mandatory reporting training with documentation of the training maintained.

Information for Parents

Over the coming days, we will continue to share information and resources with families, including a website resource page to share updated information to support parents in talking with their children about safety.

The [Children's Advocacy Center](#) offers sound and trusted guidance for parents and caregivers across many areas of child safety.

Please continue to report any safety concerns you may have to your child's school and encourage your children to do the same. We have school mental health teams to support student and staff needs. If you think your child or family could benefit from visiting with a counselor, please reach out to your school.

We value our partnership with school families and maintaining open lines of communication between home and school as we continue to work together to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

News of a child sexual abuse case can open the door for parents and caregivers to talk with their students. The following tips have been adapted from [Darkness to Light](#), a leader in child sexual abuse prevention and advocacy for behavioral impact, education and training, and research.

1) Ask open-ended questions to discover student's knowledge about the event, and any opinions that may have already been formed. These questions will help you determine your child's depth of knowledge on the subject, as well as clear up any misinformation or gaps in understanding.

- What have you heard about this case?
- What do you know about child sexual abuse?

2) Let students lead the discussion. Listen more than you talk and let them know you value their beliefs and opinions. Ask follow-up questions ("And then?") to keep the conversation going.

- What would you do if anyone made you uncomfortable or asked you to keep a secret from me?
- What would you do if a friend tells you someone touched him or her in a way that felt uncomfortable?
- How can kids help other kids who are being bullied or abused?

3) Keep your tone light and conversational to ensure students feel safe to open up. A successful conversation promotes mutual learning and future conversation.

- Do you know of anything like this happening at your school, or anywhere else?
- Is there anything else you want to talk with me about?