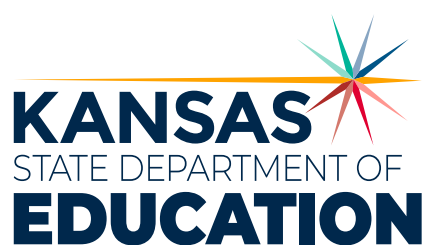


Kansas Family Guide to Continuous Learning



Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MARCH 2020



KANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MISSION

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MOTTO

Kansans Can

SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth measured locally
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study focused on career interest
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success

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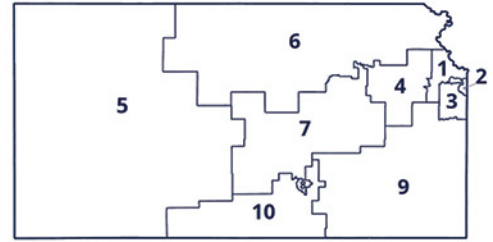


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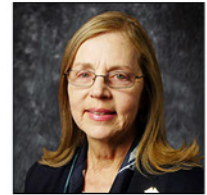
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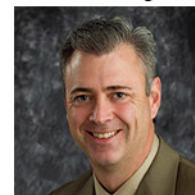
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Contents

ABOUT COVID-19. 1

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES, CAREGIVERS AND THE COMMUNITY. 1

 State and Local Cooperation. 1

 Expectations of Schools 2

 Waiver from Minimum Attendance Requirements. 2

 Special Education 2

CONTINUOUS LEARNING WHILE AT HOME 3

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT COVID-19 3

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS 4

 School Meals 4

 Options for families in need of child care 4

NOTIFICATIONS 5

 State Assessments 5

MORE INFORMATION 5

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About COVID-19

Along with many areas around the world, Kansas is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This virus can spread from person-to-person and the number of confirmed cases is growing. The resources in this guide are intended to help families, caregivers and the community understand the school's role during closure and its commitment to students and families.

Communication with Families, Caregivers and the Community

Good communication is the foundation of successful family-school-community partnerships. This communication is even more important during a health-related outbreak. In the event of a health outbreak, families and caregivers should look to their superintendent, local health organization and the [Kansas Department of Health and Environment](#)¹ (KDHE) for the most current and accurate information. The communication with families, caregivers and the larger community should be regular and not sporadic. The information should be available in languages that are understandable for the families in the community. It is critical that schools have a variety of communication strategies that reflect the types of communication preferred in the community, such as email, Facebook, Twitter, texts, news stations, newspapers, the district's home page, etc. If families and caregivers have not received communication from their schools during a closure, they should contact their school principal or superintendent.

State and Local Cooperation

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) is the state education agency charged with supporting Kansas' 286 public school districts. In Kansas, local schools have a great amount of decision-making authority over how their schools operate. The state often lays the foundation and then provides districts with flexibility to meet the needs of their unique communities. The decision to close schools is regularly made by local superintendents in response to weather and other events in order to maintain the health and safety of students and staff. During a health-related outbreak, schools must close if directed by their local health department or the governor. Local superintendents are advised to follow the expert advice and direction of public health officials in their local communities. During this health outbreak, families and caregivers should look to their superintendent, local health department and the KDHE for the most current and accurate information.

¹ <http://www.kdheks.gov/>

Expectations of Schools

Currently, the state expects schools to be:

1. Communicating regularly with students, families, caregivers, staff and the larger school community.
2. Practicing routine cleaning and disinfecting procedures of commonly touched surfaces.
3. Maintaining an open line of communication with their local health department.
4. Intentionally and persistently combating the stigma through information sharing. COVID-19 is not at all connected to race, ethnicity or nationality.
5. Actively engaging in contingency planning for the possibility of extended school closures.

There are other expectations and considerations from KSDE as the situation unfolds. These are outlined in more detail on the pages that follow.

Waiver from Minimum Attendance Requirements

In Kansas, state law stipulates schools must be in session for a minimum number of hours or days each school year. Due to the governor closing school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, the state legislature granted the Kansas State Board of Education the authority to waive the minimum number of hours or days schools must be in session.

However, just because school buildings are closed does not mean “school” or student learning won’t continue. School districts are diligently planning and problem solving to continue providing educational services to all students. This will ensure that all children can continue to learn and grow despite the closure of school buildings. School districts will apply to the State Board of Education for the waiver from the minimum attendance statute. Approval of a waiver will be dependent upon the school district’s plan for continuous learning throughout the duration of the school closure. School districts that do not have a plan for continuous learning will not be granted a waiver from minimum attendance requirements.

Special Education

To help families understand the school’s role during a closure, schools should be communicating with families and caregivers prior to, during and after a school closure regarding a child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) services. If educational services are being delivered to general education students in any form, access to those services must be equally provided, including to students receiving special education services. If a school closure causes educational services for ALL students to pause within a school or district, then the school/district is generally not required to provide services to the affected students eligible for special education services during that same period of time. After an extended closure, each child’s IEP Team must make an individualized determination as to whether, and to what extent, it may be necessary to provide compensatory education. If families or caregivers have questions about their child’s IEP, they should contact the district special education director.

For more information, please contact:

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Continuous Learning While at Home

The governor and the Kansas Commissioner of Education convened a Continuous Learning Task Force on March 14, 2020, whose primary goal was to develop guidance for Kansas educators to meet the immediate need of learners in the event that school buildings are closed. The team intentionally selected the word Continuous to help bring clarity and focus for teachers, students and families as we finish the 2019-2020 school year. Avoiding terms like “distance learning” or “virtual learning” helps our school leaders to think broadly and creatively about how to meet the learning needs of all students. One common refrain throughout this team’s short time working together has been a message of inclusiveness and equity.

The Continuous Learning Task Force has provided a framework with guidance and support materials for each Kansas school district. Each district will have to make many local decisions that are unique to their student population, staff and resources. Families and caregivers are urged to stay connected and look for more information and learning opportunities available in your local school district.

For more information regarding the Continuous Learning Framework, go to

<https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/Communications/Publications/Continuous%20Learning%20Task%20Force%20Guidance.pdf?ver=2020-03-18-230653-693>

How To Talk To Your Child About COVID-19

Concern over this new virus can make children and families anxious. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking actions that reduce the risk of illness. Helping children cope with anxiety requires providing accurate prevention information and facts without causing undue alarm.

It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. If parents seem overly worried, children’s anxiety may rise. Families should reassure children that health and school officials are working hard to ensure that people throughout the country stay healthy. However, children also need factual, age-appropriate information about the potential seriousness of disease risk and concrete instruction about how to avoid infections and the spread of disease. Teaching children positive preventive measures, talking with them about their fears and giving them a sense of some control over their risk of infection can help reduce anxiety.

The following links provide support when talking with children about the coronavirus:

- [Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource, National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)²](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Kids about Coronavirus, Public Broadcasting Service \(PBS\)³](#)

² [https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

³ <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>

Other Considerations

School Meals

Many schools are providing free meals through the USDA Summer Food Service Program due to unanticipated school closure for COVID-19. Meals are available to anyone ages 1-18 who come to a meal site or are part of a mobile route. Free meals will help families save money and stretch their already tight food budgets. Food served is healthy and follows USDA nutrition guidelines. Different from the summer meal program, meals will not have to be eaten on-site but can be taken home. No application or proof of income is needed.

Please contact your local school or district office for information about meal options being provided in your community.

Options for families in need of child care

Many working families are facing challenges related to accessing healthy and safe child care during this time. We encourage everyone to assist with supporting families and communities as they work to develop creative solutions to meet the needs of working families.

[Child Care Aware of Kansas](http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/)⁴ provides assistance to families searching for licensed child care. They can be reached toll free at (877) 678-2548.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has an [online information system](http://www.kdheks.gov/bcclr/capp.htm)⁵ that serves as a tool to support families in making informed child care choices and can be used to review compliance history of a current licensed provider. The online tool is an important step to verifying that a facility is licensed and provides compliance history for parents and guardians.

Families that need flexible options or irregular care might consider having someone come into the home. Relatives, older siblings, and friends or neighbors currently not working due to COVID-19 related business closures might be available to help.

Other options for families that need limited care include informal care arranged between friends/neighbors on an irregular basis or someone to provide care in their own home for no more than two children for not more than 20 hours week. None of these options require a license from KDHE.

⁴ <http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/>

⁵ <http://www.kdheks.gov/bcclr/capp.htm>

Notifications

State Assessments

KSDE does not expect schools to administer state assessments when schools are closed. Even though the Kansas state assessments are administered online, the tests cannot be given to students in a remote location.

More Information

[Family Action Plan](#)⁶ from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

For the most accurate information stay connected to the following agencies:

- Kansas Department of Health and Environment, <http://www.kdheks.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <https://www.hhs.gov/>

⁶ http://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus/download/Family_Action_Plan_handout.pdf

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