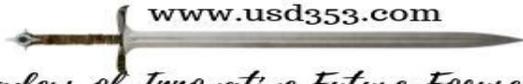


WELLINGTON School District

www.usd353.com



Leaders of Innovative Future-Focused Real World Learning



Dear USD 353 and Wellington Community,

Last week, the State Board of Education adopted recommendations to modify the state's Navigating Change gating criteria for schools based on new data from a team of health experts. This team, the Kansas COVID-19 Workgroup for Kids, recommended modifying the state's Navigating Change school operation guidance to allow for younger children to remain in an in-person or hybrid learning environment even if county metrics recommend remote learning. The Workgroup cited research that in Kansas, on Nov. 23, only 3.2 percent of COVID-19 cases were among children up to nine-years-old, which is similar to the national figures.

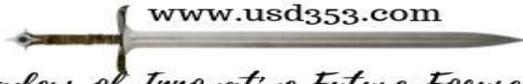
At tonight's BOE meeting, the USD 353 BOE voted to follow these recommendations and open our elementary schools, grades K-5, full time (Monday-Friday) for the second semester **beginning on Tuesday, January 19th**. This start date will allow the two week incubation period of the virus to pass after the holidays. Please note that remote learning is still an option for students for second semester.

The following is important information you need to know:

- Drop off each morning will be at 7:50am. Please continue to stay in your vehicles until your students temperature has been checked. Students will be released at 3:40pm.
- Masks will still be required for all students
- Social distancing will be enforced when possible, however cannot be guaranteed in every classroom or circumstance. When social distancing is not possible, students will be grouped in small groups or cohorts of 5 students or less. This will lessen the number of students having to quarantine in case of COVID-19 exposure.
- Students will be participating in recess and masks will be required, but mask breaks are allowed as necessary.
- Students will still be offered both breakfast and lunch (free through the end of the year). These meals will be eaten in the classroom. Students may bring sack lunches from home.
- All building guidelines such as parent entry, birthday treats, etc. will remain the same as during a hybrid schedule
- The Latch Key program will be offered after school beginning Jan. 19th. More information on this will be sent out at a later date.

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- **Grades 6-12** will continue to operate in the established hybrid phase until further notice. The gating criteria has not changed for these grade levels due to the virus affecting this age group of students at a higher rate.

If you have any questions specific to your student(s) school, please contact that school's principal. Additionally, if you would like to change your student(s) learning commitment (on-site or remote) Please contact your student's school by **Friday, Dec. 18th. This is for all students grades K-12.**

I want to continue to remind everyone that moving to remote learning for the district or an individual building could be necessary due to a cluster or staffing issue.

As the first semester draws to an end, I want to again thank everyone for their support. It was a challenging semester in many ways, but we persevered and had many successes. We were able to keep our schools open and our students learning, performing and competing. Thank you parents, students, teachers, administrators, and staff for your hard work, patience, and flexibility this semester.

Enjoy the holiday break!

Adam Hatfield
Superintendent, USD 353