

USD 415 board votes to change quarantine policy

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha School Board has voted to revise the district's quarantine policy.

Following a lengthy discussion Monday evening, the USD 415 board voted unanimously to only quarantine students and staff who have at least two symptoms of COVID-19.

That's a change from the guidelines established by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, which the board had adopted as part of the district's Return to Learn Plan.

At a special meeting August 31, the board voted to put a mask mandate in place for two weeks in an effort to reduce the number of students in quarantine. At that time, there were more than 100 students in quarantine.

At Monday evening's meeting, District Head Nurse Erin Wenger said coronavirus-related numbers in Hiawatha schools had dramatically improved. Wenger reported there were a total of six positive cases in the district, with three of those at the high school. In addition, she said there were 26 students in quarantine.

Concern over the possibility of a spike in quarantines after removing the mask mandate is what led the board to change the policy to only quarantine symptomatic students and district staff.

It was the general consensus of the board to let the mask mandate expire as of the original date of the morning of Tuesday, September 14.

During the public comment portion of the meeting several patrons voiced their concerns about the mask mandate.

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