



## Frequently Asked Questions

Dec. 18, 2020

**My child has been in the Rigorous Remote/Remote Flex full-remote learning model all year. Does he have to transition to face-to-face or hybrid learning on Jan. 4? How long will the opt-in remote learning be offered?**

Families who previously selected the full-time remote learning model will stay in that model. Both the Rigorous Remote/Remote Flex full-time remote learning model will be available in the third quarter/term.

The Rigorous Remote learning model will continue to be available for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. This is the full-time remote learning model available to students in pre-K through 12 in which students are engaging daily with a Maize USD 266 teacher and classmates online at specific times.

[The T4T Summary Sheet includes additional information about the current learning models.](#)

**My child has been attending school in person all year. Can we elect to have her in full-time remote learning now?**

Families can opt to work with their children's school to pursue a change [in learning model](#). Families who now prefer the full-time remote learning model may have an option between Remote Rigorous for grades pre-K through 12 and Remote Flex for grades 6 through 12. The next date for a learning model change is Jan. 25, the start of the next quarter/term. Please [contact your child's school](#) if you wish to pursue such a change. However, a transition for a student wishing to move from the hybrid model into full-time remote may not be possible until the end of the second quarter, Jan. 22.

**Why will pre-K and elementary school students attend school in person five days a week and middle and high school students attend in person only two days a week?**

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education, and Sedgwick County have provided our district with additional confidence in our ability to transition students back to school. As research and evidence shows that younger children are less susceptible and vulnerable to COVID-19, we will begin our transition back to face-to-face learning with our youngest students.

### **When might middle and high school students start attending school in person more frequently?**

The goal for Maize USD 266 and the Maize Board of Education is to return students to full-time in-person teaching and learning as soon as it is safely possible to do so. This will be considered again during the school board's next regularly scheduled monthly meeting at 7 p.m. Jan. 11. As long as we must continue to adhere to state and county guidelines related to social distancing and close contact quarantines, having a higher density of students in our secondary schools will be a challenge.

### **Did the district receive additional COVID-19 funding for the 2020-21 school year?**

Yes, but not nearly as much as has been rumored. Maize USD 266 received an initial allocation of \$407,763 in federal CARES money and \$298,553.08 in SPARK money from Sedgwick County. In late October/early November, the district was notified of the opportunity to receive an additional \$124,800.95 in SPARK money from Sedgwick County. The district recently completed spending all of the SPARK money and continues to allocate expenses to the CARES money. A portion of CARES funding must be allocated to private schools. COVID-related expenditures have included the following.

- **Nursing staff:** We have hired two additional nurses, including one with work experience with the Sedgwick County Health Department, to serve on the district's COVID Response Team, manage contract tracing, communicate with families, answer questions, work with the county health department, and advise and support colleagues. They also can serve as backups to our school nurses, who serve such a crucial role in our buildings, especially right now.
- **Increased cleaning:** On Sept. 14, our Maize Board of Education approved a cleaning contract amendment with our contracted cleaning crew to address the increased cleaning and sanitization efforts necessary due to COVID-19. This was a more cost-effective option compared to hiring additional employees. This will increase trash removal and vacuuming services, as well as the sanitization of frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, crashbars, light switches, and countertops. This will cost an additional \$173,931 for the 2020-21 school year.
- **Staff member compensation:** The district required additional workforce to develop its T4T Reopening Plan this summer.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE) and sanitation supplies:** Maize USD 266 has purchased necessary supplies to safely operate schools during COVID-19, including face masks, clear dividers, hand sanitizer, face shields, hospital-grade disinfectant, additional electrostatic sprayers, disinfecting wipes, additional rags, thermometers, gloves, goggles, and air purifiers. Examples of specific costs include \$29,736.97 for various face masks and face shields for students and employees, \$20,976.24 for thermometers and temperature-taking stations, and \$12,438.85 for desk shields.
- **Five help desk teachers:** The district has hired educators who represent a variety of grade levels and subject areas for the Academic Help Desk program, which offers free support to all Maize USD 266 students from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on school days. Students can [visit bit.ly/266HelpDesk](https://bit.ly/266HelpDesk) to complete and submit a digital form to request help from one of the educators.

**What has the district done to recruit additional substitute teachers this school year?**

Maize USD 266 has promoted its substitute opening on the district website and social media, as well as on the paid recruiting site Ziprecruiter. The Maize Board of Education also approved a temporary pay increase to \$130 per day due to the substitute teacher shortage.

**Is the district also paying administrative substitutes?**

In a necessary and temporary move, the district is paying a retired administrator a daily substitute wage to fill a vacancy that exists due to personnel reasons.

**Why does the district quarantine so many students and staff members who are not symptomatic or who may receive a negative COVID test?**

Maize USD 266 follows the directive of the Sedgwick County Health Department, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Our district supports this strategy in an effort to protect the health and safety of our students and staff members. Some changes have been made recently that will allow for abbreviated quarantine periods. These changes are now reflected in school-specific student self-assessments posted on the district's website at [bit.ly/266self-assessment](https://bit.ly/266self-assessment). The assessment will help parents know whether their children can attend school based on health and other scenarios.

**Why will staff members or Maize Board of Education members not respond to my emails?**

This school year, employees and school board members continue to receive a large amount of correspondence and have a significant amount of COVID-related issues to address regularly in addition to normal tasks. Although it often is not possible to respond individually to each correspondence, staff members and board members are reading all feedback received. Parents are encouraged to communicate first through their children's school by contacting a teacher, counselor, principal, or other employee. In order to improve communication and transparency, the district may continue to expand this FAQ and consider other regular updates beyond those currently in place.

**Did the district ever consider a face-to-face in-person learning model for secondary students during the fall?**

The district considered all options and has based decisions on the mitigation guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Sedgwick County Health Department to prevent spread of the virus. We believe that our traditional model of instruction is the best option and actively sought ways to continue this model while still protecting staff members and students. Overall, the hybrid model is much more difficult for students, staff members, and parents and, once we no longer need to socially distance or quarantine close contacts, we hope to make this transition.

If the district transitions to a full face-to-face learning model for secondary students while community spread is at the current or similarly high rate, the number of families requesting a

full-time remote model likely would increase significantly. This transition of students from the hybrid model to the full remote option would require the district to also transition teachers from one model to the other, potentially increasing the student density in many classrooms.

**Why has the district not addressed the overcrowded middle schools and high schools?**

With the recent bond issue approved by voters in August 2019, construction has begun on two new intermediate schools. Maize Intermediate School and Maize South Intermediate School are set to open in August of 2021 in time for the 2021-22 school year. These schools will significantly relieve our crowded elementary and middle schools. The bond issue also will allow us to expand the overcrowded Maize South High School, and that construction will begin in the summer of 2021. Unfortunately, the timeline required to work through the construction process is lengthy, and we were not able to have these buildings and spaces ready in time to provide current alleviation at this point in the pandemic.

The creation of secondary boundary attendance lines that directs our secondary students through a feeder pattern of middle and high schools was implemented in 2017. However, part of the transition between the old preference model and the new boundary model allowed for middle school students to continue to select a preferred high school. For two years, the number of preferences made for Maize South High School were higher than they had been historically. This has led to the current higher student population at Maize South High. Further, the overall enrollment increase throughout the district, especially for high school students, has been much higher than in the past or than what was projected.

**There are plenty of people who want to help/volunteer. How can we get involved?**

Maize USD 266 is a strong believer that we are stronger and better together. As a district, we love our volunteers and the care and energy they bring to our district. However, the operations of a school building and a school day are complex, managing a large number of students and a large number of classes, spaces, and needs. One of the greatest challenges with qualified and well-intentioned school volunteers is having a regular and consistent presence to support any school's efficient operations and balance of the succinct schedules, necessary supervision, and required safety protocols. It can be difficult when volunteers are incorporated into the school day schedule and then, based on the nature of volunteerism, a volunteer position becomes vacant for a day or any period of time, especially when this happens with little to no notice.

**Why can some school districts our size have all students in school every day?**

Data is being collected and will be published soon to address this question.

**Has the district considered using alternative facilities/spaces to allow for more in-person instruction?**

Yes, the district has considered many possibilities. The challenges for middle and high school schedules would be the number of classes our students attend each day. Teachers use a variety of resources that may not be available at these potential off-site locations, and the adequate Internet capacity needed likely does not exist in these spaces. In addition to alternative spaces, the district would need additional licensed and classified staff members in order to provide

supervision and support services, such as those related to nursing and administrative needs, for students. The use of additional spaces, especially outside of the regular school setting such as a church, the Maize Recreation Commission, or a theater, would still require the hiring of staff members to instruct and/or supervise students in those spaces.