

Feb. 19, 2021

Greetings Senators,

My name is Heather McPhail, I am a registered nurse currently working at USD 262, Valley Center Middle School. I support all my students and their families no matter if they vaccinate or not. The decision to vaccinate or not vaccinate should be made after the parent(s) has done their due diligence obtaining information to assist them in making the decision and also discussions with their healthcare provider. Those parents are not the group that causes me concern when it comes to this issue. I'm most worried about the parents that are already lackadaisical about things; things from paying bills, feeding their children and addressing their health care needs.

Are you aware that if an-unvaccinated student is exposed to a vaccine preventable disease they are required to quarantine for the entire incubation period of the disease? It has been my experience that most parents are not aware of this when they choose to not vaccinate. Incubation time varies by disease but for instance Chicken Pox(Varicella) has a 21 day incubation period. So any unvaccinated student(s) deemed a close contact of a case would not be allowed to attend school for 21 days. The inconsistency this could cause in the student's education would certainly have a negative impact on the student, but also the educators that we so desperately need to keep in the classroom. Given the current situation we are in we are well aware that virtual learning is not as effective for most students as in-person/classroom learning is. The following is a link to the Kansas Classroom Handbook of Communicable Diseases, published by KDHE: https://www.kdheks.gov/epi/download/Kansas_Classroom_Handbook_of_Communicable_Diseases.pdf. It provides guidance when addressing a communicable disease issue.

We have vaccinations for communicable diseases because years ago scientists did not want another human being to die by something that could possibly be prevented. Perhaps their own children or other family members died from Pertussis. Do you know why Pertussis can be fatal for babies? Babies cannot cough forcibly enough to clear the respiratory secretions produced by Pertussis and they essentially drown in their own mucus. Can you imagine being a parent or grandparent having to see this happen? If you pass this bill that would be the fate of more and more babies.

As school required vaccinations are handled today, parents still have the option to opt out of receiving them at any point. Please do not make it easier for parents to not address the health and wellbeing of their children. That appointment to get vaccinations might be the only time a medical provider lays eyes on that child. I ask that you not politicize this issue and continue to allow the KDHE to provide vaccination recommendations based on information from the CDC and scientific data.

Please vote "no" on SB 212 and maintain the vaccination structure that works for Kansas.

Sincerely,

Heather McPhail, BSN