

*February 28, 2022*

The Kansas State Department of Education sent notification to school districts today (2/28) that confirmed the following statement from the CDC, "Effective February 25, 2022, CDC does not require wearing of masks on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and education/child care programs."

**Effective immediately, masks will no longer be required when traveling on school buses or vans in the Auburn-Washburn School District.** Drivers and students are welcome to wear masks if they choose to do so.

*February 25, 2022*

### **AW Scorecard & Testing Update**

This week the Auburn-Washburn Board of Education adopted changes to the Auburn-Washburn Scorecard. These changes include:

- The Scorecard will continue to be posted at [www.usd437.net](http://www.usd437.net) each Friday but weekly messages will no longer be sent unless numbers change significantly
- Only positive student cases will be tracked on the Scorecard
- Masks will be required in a school only when the percent of positive student cases is 5.1% or above (the requirement will be in effect on a single week-by-week basis)

**Please note that a federal order remains in effect requiring masks on school buses.**

This week's [Auburn-Washburn scorecard can be found here](#).

### **Test to Learn/Test to Work**

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has transitioned the TTL/TTW program to a Test to Know approach. Also, due to the drastically reduced number of students and staff needing COVID-19 testing, the testing center at Shuler Education Center is adjusting its hours to the following:

- AM session 7:00-9:00 am
- PM session 4:00-6:00 pm

*February 17, 2022*

Auburn-Washburn School Community,

There are three important and timely updates in this email. Please read the entire message to help ensure clarity as we move into Friday, February 18, and begin next week.

First, school will be cancelled in the Auburn-Washburn School District on Friday, February 18, due to the amount of ice still on many neighborhood streets, gravel roads, and roads less traveled today. Members of our team traveled numerous roads late this afternoon and the simple fact is our buses do not travel well on ice. We spoke to those treating the roads and learned that the temperature did not rise enough throughout the day to allow the treatment to work as effectively as needed. The morning commute to school is too risky so the decision has been made to err on the side of caution.

Second, based on the forecast throughout the day tomorrow, events scheduled for after school and during the weekend will continue as planned. Driving conditions are expected to be safe by Friday afternoon and over the weekend due to increasing temperatures and additional work on the roads.

Third, COVID-19 related numbers are decreasing significantly in Shawnee County and within Auburn-Washburn. Data points suggest we have moved past the Omicron spike. The Shawnee County indicator score moved from red to orange this week. When the county is out of the red, the threshold used when analyzing the Auburn-Washburn scorecard is 5%.

This week's Auburn-Washburn scorecard can be found [here](#). Internal Auburn-Washburn numbers have continued to trend downward over the last six weeks. With a 5% threshold in place, all schools are in the green (0 – 0.9% masks optional) or yellow (1 – 4.9% masks strongly encouraged) range this week and last. Moving into next week, the week of February 21, masks will not be required at any school or school-related event. Masks are strongly encouraged at Pauline Central and Wanamaker but not required. Of course, students and staff always have the choice to wear masks in any school at any time.

Thank you for reading this entire message.  
Scott

Dr. Scott McWilliams  
Superintendent of Schools

*February 11, 2022*

### **AW COVID-19 Scorecard**

The Shawnee County Indicator Score was in the red this week. Based on Auburn-Washburn data this week, masks will be required indoors at the following Auburn-Washburn schools next week, February 15-18:

- WRHS
- WRMS
- Farley Elementary
- Indian Hills Elementary
- Pauline Central
- Pauline South
- Wanamaker Elementary

Masks will not be required at the following schools next week, February 15-18:

- Auburn Elementary
- Jay Shideler Elementary

[Click here to view the scorecard](#)

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*February 4, 2022*

### **AW COVID-19 Scorecard**

The Shawnee County Indicator Score was in the red this week. Based on Auburn-Washburn data this week, masks will be required indoors at all Auburn-Washburn schools next week, February 7 - 11. [Click here to view the scorecard](#).

### **Transportation Email Messages**

Email updates from [Ride360](#), the district's bus tracking system, will now be coming from the email address [ride360notification@usd437.net](mailto:ride360notification@usd437.net). Please check your email system settings to make sure messages from this address are not routed to spam or trash folders.

*January 21, 2022*

The Shawnee County Indicator Score remained in the red this week. The percentage of COVID-19 incidents this week (1/14 – 1/20) was over 3% at each school so masks will be required inside all schools for the next two weeks (week of January 24 and January 31). A school must be out of the red on the Auburn-Washburn Scorecard for two consecutive weeks to move from masks required. Here is this week's [Auburn-Washburn Scorecard](#).

Due to guidance received early this week from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Shawnee County Health Department, and the Kansas State Department of Education, Auburn-Washburn is no longer contact tracing. The "In-School Close Contact" section is still on the scorecard but those rows have been shaded in grey due to the fact it is not a data point currently being tracked.

The Shawnee County Health Department is no longer distributing isolation and quarantine orders; instead, health orders are publicly posted. The latest guidance for Shawnee County, which was revised on January 13, 2022, can be found in the [Shawnee County Isolation and Quarantine Guidance Documents](#). This document provides answers to many frequently asked questions.

When testing supplies are available, Auburn-Washburn remains committed to testing students and staff that become symptomatic. Testing is also available as a component of Test to Learn/Work for those who would otherwise be quarantined as a close contact. Testing is available at the Shuler Education Center (5928 SW 53<sup>rd</sup> Street), Monday through Friday, at the following times:

- 6:45 – 9:45 am
- 11:00 am – 1:00 pm
- 3:30 – 6:30 pm

*January 19, 2022*

One thing we have learned since COVID-19 first impacted our schools is that things continue to evolve and change which creates the need for course corrections. The purpose of this email to staff and parents is to keep you informed on a recent change that will impact our approach to contact tracing.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), the Shawnee County Health Department (SCHD), and the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) have stated that the ability to effectively contact trace has become nearly impossible. Efforts and resources should be shifted towards identification and rapid isolation of actively infectious students and staff.

KDHE announced today, "On February 1, 2022, KDHE will discontinue contact tracing, which notifies close contacts exposed to COVID-19. Local Health Departments have already begun to wind down contact tracing, and K-12 schools who were participating in contact tracing as a part of a Test to Stay program may temporarily suspend contact tracing as well."

The SCHD is no longer distributing isolation and quarantine orders; instead, health orders are publicly posted. The latest guidance for Shawnee County, which was revised on January 13, 2022, can be found at [Shawnee County Isolation and Quarantine Guidance Documents](#).

The following joint statement from KDHE and KSDE was released today, "For a 30-day period starting Tuesday, January 18, school districts may temporarily suspend identifying close contacts potentially exposed to COVID-19 in classroom and extracurricular settings. KDHE and KSDE will re-evaluate this recommendation after 30 days."

We have leaned on the guidance provided by KDHE, SCHD, and KSDE throughout the pandemic and we appreciate their efforts greatly. We will follow their guidance on contact tracing as well. Effective January 19, 2022, the Auburn-Washburn School District will no longer contact trace in schools and at extracurricular settings. The following provides a brief list of expectations as we move forward.

Expectations for Auburn-Washburn:

- Continue tracking COVID-19 incidents each week and distribute factual data on Fridays.
- Rapid identification of outbreaks in classrooms or group setting will be monitored.
- Test to Learn / Work remains an option for staff and students as long as testing supplies are available (details below)
- Staff are expected to stay home if sick.
- Maintain timely and accurate communication regarding COVID-19.

Expectations for parents:

- Become familiar with and follow the [Shawnee County Isolation and Quarantine Guidance Documents](#).
- Regularly monitor your children for symptoms of COVID-19.
- If your child is symptomatic, have your child tested with a diagnostic test if available.
- Do not send your child to school if they are sick or if they test positive.
  - Everyone who tests positive needs to stay home for a minimum of 5 days. They may resume normal activities, while masking for an additional 5 days.
- Notify your school if your child tests positive.
- If your child has been exposed, monitor them for 10 days after exposure. Have your child tested immediately if they become symptomatic.

#### Update on Test to Learn / Work:

- When testing supplies are available, the Shuler Education Center test site will be the only Test to Learn / Work location; testing will no longer be offered in schools.
- When testing supplies are available, the Shuler Education Center test site will be available on school days at the following times:
  - 6:45 - 9:45 am
  - 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
  - 3:30 - 6:30 pm
- The primary goal is diagnostic testing; to support students and staff who become symptomatic during the school day and/or notify a school nurse of being symptomatic.
- Antigen testing is an option for individuals coming back from the 5 days of home isolation.

#### Current Mask Requirement Remains in Place:

As previously stated, masks will be required indoors each Auburn-Washburn school during the school day and when attending an indoor event this week (January 17-23) and next week (January 24-30). A school must be out of the red on the Auburn-Washburn scorecard for two consecutive weeks to transition out of masks required to masks strongly encouraged.

The Auburn-Washburn Scorecard is released every Friday. The current Auburn-Washburn Scorecard can be found [here](#).

Thank you for remaining informed as we continue to navigate changes associated with an ever-changing environment.

Scott

*January 14, 2022*

The first two weeks of our second semester have been taxing. The number of student and staff COVID-19-related incidents are increasing which mirrors what is occurring in Shawnee County. Last week, for example, 139 Test to Learn/Work tests were administered and 21 results were positive. This week, 575 Test to Learn/Work tests were administered and 72 results were positive.

Each school implemented plans this week to accommodate for staff absences but those plans are not sustainable for the long-haul. Please help spread the word that we are hiring substitute teachers. If you or someone you know is interested in being a substitute teacher, even if only to help us make it through this current uptick in absences, please visit our website at [usd437.net/careers](https://usd437.net/careers). We need more substitute teachers to create sustainable plans.

At last night's Board of Education meeting, two modifications were made to the Auburn-Washburn Scorecard. One, when the Shawnee County Indicator Score is red, the trigger for requiring masks in each school will decrease from 5% to 3%. When the Shawnee County Indicator Score is Green, Yellow, or Orange, the trigger remains at 5%. Second, each COVID-19 incident reported on the Scorecard will be counted at face value. These incidents are: positive student case, in-school close contact, out of school close contact, Test to Learn participant. Previously, positive student cases were multiplied by 2 and out of school close contacts were multiplied by 0.5.

Based on this week's [Auburn-Washburn Scorecard](#), masks will be required in all schools moving into next week. As a reminder, a school must have two consecutive weeks out of the red to remove the mask requirement. The current trigger is 3% due to the fact the Shawnee County Indicator Score is red.

Thank you, and have an enjoyable weekend,  
Scott

Dr. Scott McWilliams  
Superintendent of Schools

*January 13, 2022*

Auburn-Washburn School Community,

I have stated and wrote many times how much I value and respect the Auburn-Washburn school community. Our parents, patrons, and businesses are engaged and find value in supporting education. Thank you for what you have done and continue to do to support our work with over 6,100 students.

I am writing today to ask a huge favor as well as to share a proactive update.

First, the favor. The State Board of Education unanimously approved an emergency declaration to help school districts attract and hire substitute teachers. A news release with background information from the State Board can be found [here](#). Please spread the word in our school community that we need substitute teachers. Based on the temporary requirements that are in place now through the rest of this school year, if you or someone you know is willing to serve our school community as a substitute teacher, please encourage them to apply at [usd437.net/careers](http://usd437.net/careers). Professional development and support will be provided to those we hire to ensure their success as a substitute teacher.

Second, a proactive update. I encourage families to consider creating a contingency plan for transportation to and from school. We have not been fully staffed with bus drivers this entire school year, however, several drivers are currently in isolation or quarantine. Our transportation team has a plan in place for today and tomorrow but that plan contains numerous double and even triple routes. We are extremely thankful of the bus drivers we have, they are wonderful, but it would be such a gift to our school community to hire more. Please be patient with transportation services and use [Ride 360](#) to your benefit as we make adjustments to routes due to drivers in isolation and quarantine.

Thank you for your understanding and for spreading the word about our need for substitute teachers and the state-approved changes currently in place through the rest of this school year.

Thanks,

Scott

Dr. Scott McWilliams

Superintendent of Schools



*January 7, 2022*

I hope you and your families had an enjoyable holiday season. It did not take long this week to get into full speed of the second semester. As our first week comes to a close, I wanted to share the following five updates:

- We will continue to track, report, and take action on COVID-19 and Test to Learn numbers each week on Friday. Based on the [Auburn-Washburn Scorecard](#) this week, masks will be required when indoors at the following schools next week: Auburn, Farley, Indian Hills, Pauline Central, Pauline South, and Wanamaker elementary schools. Masks are strongly encouraged at Jay Shideler, Washburn Rural Middle School, Washburn Rural High School, and Tallgrass.
- Staffing continues to be a concern in our schools. If you are someone you know would be interested in joining our team as a bus driver, paraeducator, or substitute teacher, please encourage them apply at [usd437.net/careers](https://usd437.net/careers). We have other positions available as well but are in critical need of bus drivers, paraeducators, and substitute teachers.
- The Shawnee County Health Department shared updated interim guidance to Shawnee County school districts on December 31 in response to changes made by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The most notable changes are the timeline for home isolation and quarantine decreased from 10 to 5 days and masks must be worn for an additional 5 days after isolation and quarantine. Also, eligible school employees are now able to opt-in to the Test to Learn/Work program.
- We have hired four additional part-time nurses to help support the Test to Learn/Work program. We are setting up a central testing site to provide an option to those who are determined to be close contacts and are needing to get tested to remain at school or work. This site may be able to offer a more convenient testing schedule and will reduce some of the load on the individual school nurses. Please continue to work with the nurse in your building. They will be able to explain the additional testing options when they become available.
- As we enter the winter months, if a day of school must be canceled due to inclement weather, it will be a traditional snow day. We will not transition a canceled day of school into a remote learning day this year for three reasons. One, we have time built into the school calendar to accommodate for inclement weather days. Two, the feedback received last year by many families was transitioning to remote days created undue stress on their student. And three, guidelines on remote learning at the state level changed moving into this school year which places restrictions on remote learning.

Thank you for the support you provide to our schools! It is important for us to work together as a school community to successfully move through the second semester.

Have a nice weekend!

Dr. Scott McWilliams  
Superintendent of Schools