

## 2021 Kansas Statutes

**48-925c. Operation and closure of school districts during COVID-19 state of disaster emergency; school district board of education as the sole authority; guidance by other governmental officials allowed; procedure to contest board action; civil action.** (a) (1) During the state of disaster emergency related to the COVID-19 health emergency described in K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 48-924b, and amendments thereto, only the board of education responsible for the maintenance, development and operation of a school district shall have the authority to take any action, issue any order or adopt any policy made or taken in response to such disaster emergency that affects the operation of any school or attendance center of such school district, including, but not limited to, any action, order or policy that:

- (A) Closes or has the effect of closing any school or attendance center of such school district;
- (B) authorizes or requires any form of attendance other than full-time, in-person attendance at a school in the school district, including, but not limited to, hybrid or remote learning; or
- (C) mandates any action by any students or employees of a school district while on school district property.

(2) An action taken, order issued or policy adopted by the board of education of a school district pursuant to paragraph (1) shall only affect the operation of schools under the jurisdiction of the board and shall not affect the operation of nonpublic schools.

(3) During any such disaster emergency, the state board of education, the governor, the department of health and environment, a local health officer, a city health officer or any other state or local unit of government may provide guidance, consultation or other assistance to the board of education of a school district but shall not take any action related to such disaster emergency that affects the operation of any school or attendance center of such school district pursuant to paragraph (1).

(b) Any meeting of a board of education of a school district discussing an action, order or policy described in this section, including any hearing by the board under subsection (c), shall be open to the public in accordance with the open meetings act, K.S.A. 75-4317 et seq., and amendments thereto, and may be conducted by electronic audio-visual communication when necessary to secure the health and safety of the public, the board and employees.

(c) (1) An employee, a student or the parent or guardian of a student aggrieved by an action taken, order issued or policy adopted by the board of education of a school district pursuant to subsection (a)(1), or an action of any employee of a school district violating any such action, order or policy, may request a hearing by such board of education to contest such action, order or policy within 30 days after the action was taken, order was issued or policy was adopted by the board of education. Any such request shall not stay or enjoin such action, order or policy.

(2) Upon receipt of a request under paragraph (1), the board of education shall conduct a hearing within 72 hours of receiving such request for the purposes of reviewing, amending or revoking such action, order or policy. The board shall issue a decision within seven days after the hearing is conducted.

(3) The board of education may adopt emergency rules of procedure to facilitate the efficient adjudication of any hearing requested under this subsection, including, but not limited to, rules for consolidation of similar hearings.

(d) (1) An employee, a student or the parent or guardian of a student aggrieved by a decision of the board of education under subsection (c)(2) may file a civil action in the district court of the county in which such party resides or in the district court of Shawnee

county, Kansas, within 30 days after such decision is issued by the board. Notwithstanding any order issued pursuant to K.S.A. 2021 Supp. 20-172(a), and amendments thereto, the court shall conduct a hearing within 72 hours after receipt of a petition in any such action. The court shall grant the request for relief unless the court finds the action taken, order issued or policy adopted by the board of education is narrowly tailored to respond to the state of disaster emergency and uses the least restrictive means to achieve such purpose. The court shall issue an order on such petition within seven days after the hearing is conducted. If the court does not issue an order on such petition within seven days, the relief requested in the petition shall be granted.

(2) Relief under this section shall not include a stay or injunction concerning the contested action taken, order issued or policy adopted by the board of education that applies beyond the county in which the petition was filed.

(3) The supreme court may adopt emergency rules of procedure to facilitate the efficient adjudication of any hearing requested under this subsection, including, but not limited to, rules for consolidation of similar hearings.

**History:** L. 2021, ch. 7, § 1; March 25.