

USD 415 board discusses mask requirement

**(KNZA)--The Hiawatha School district's current mask requirement was among topics discussed when the USD 415 Board of Education met Monday evening.**

**It came up after the Board heard an update from Brown County Health Officer Robin Downard.**

**As of Monday, Downard said there were only four active COVID-19 cases in Brown County, with no hospitalizations.**

**She said the Brown County Health Department continues to administer COVID-19 vaccines to those age 65 and older under phase 2 of the state's vaccination plan.**

**Downard said they have administered about 1,000 first doses of the vaccine so far to those in that population category and by the end of the week hope to complete the vaccination of those who have signed up.**

**Only about 200 have received their second doses, which Downard said they plan to complete by April 9.**

**Teachers have been vaccinated, with the majority receiving their second doses.**

**The school district has begun to ease some of their COVID protocols, but Downard recommended the Board keep the mask requirement in place through the end of the school year.**

**Some board members would like to see it lifted before then.**

**Board member John Wright said he would like to see masks made optional after spring break for teachers who have been vaccinated.**

**Board members Ian Schuetz and Amy Kopp indicated they would be in favor of lifting the mask requirement once the 65-plus age group has been fully vaccinated in April.**

**Board President Tom Simmer voiced support for keeping the mask requirement in place, and questioned whether the district could make a change since the city of Hiawatha is under a mask mandate. Superintendent Lonnie Moser will contact the city to see if the district can make its own decision.**

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