



Breastfeeding Policies and Support

Provided by the [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#)

Over 90% of new mothers in Kansas choose to breastfeed. When they return to work, they require only three things: 1) Break time; 2) Private space; and 3) Support

Support of breastfeeding employees and staff is an innovative strategy to address costly human resource expenses such as retention, health care, and absenteeism. It's also the law.

A [2017 survey of over 160 Kansas school districts](#) showed most left the matter to building administrators to provide accommodations when asked for them by breastfeeding staff. This informal "when she asks" approach creates missed opportunities for providing support and inconsistent implementation.

The following tools were developed by and for Kansas school districts to support a district level lactation support program.

COVID Considerations for Breastfeeding Employees

To ensure the safety of district employees and staff expressing breast milk while in the workplace, school districts should take the following extra precautions:

- Purify air: open windows, use HEPA air filters, or set up outdoor space that is shielded from view, as weather permit
- For spaces used by several employees at the same time - enforce social distancing and masks, and install plexiglass or walls
- Clean surfaces with soap and provide disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer

Employees and students working remotely are allowed to turn off their computer's camera for breastfeeding if the school district allows other employees and/or students to turn off their cameras for other reasons.

General Support for Breastfeeding Employees & Staff:

- [Checklist](#) – quickly determine what might be missing in your district's lactation support
- [Optional Employee Handbook Language: Lactation Accommodations](#), from KASB
- [Communication Plan](#) – step-by-step plan to let district employees and staff know they are supported (increases retention rate by 50%!)
- Poster for breakrooms - ["Let's Give Her a Break" for schools](#)
- Kansas School District Success Stories - [Fort Scott USD #234](#) and [Lawrence USD #497](#)
- [Time & space solutions from K-12](#) settings across the US

General Support for Breastfeeding Students:

- Title IX Coordinators - [Title IX protections for breastfeeding students](#)
- Consider use of Section 504 accommodations to create a plan

Many of these resources are attached. Keep scrolling...



School District Check List

of

Support for Breastfeeding Staff

- ☐ Written policy/procedure/provision (see [sample policy](#) or KASB's suggested *Employee Handbook Language*)
- ☐ Communication plan
 - Employee Handbook
 - Maternity Leave meeting
 - New employee orientation
 - Employee benefits webpage/document
 - Recruitment interview
- ☐ Scheduling/coverage
 - Arrange staff's schedule to allow for sufficient pumping breaks
 - "Floater" staff to cover
 - Supervisor covers
- ☐ Identify space(s) to pump all company buildings
 - Ask building staff to send photos of space (incentivize)
 - KBC can provide free onsite tours of buildings to help identify suitable spaces
- ☐ Education/Support
 - Provide list of local and web-based breastfeeding support resources to employees at maternity leave meeting ([Resource Flyer](#))
 - Provide breastfeeding educational materials in identified spaces for pumping if appropriate

Employee informs
HR of upcoming
family leave

HR provides employee with the follow *before they go out on family leave*:

- Copy of Worksite Lactation Provision
- Information about obtaining a breast pump from insurance
- Check list for returning to work
- List of local breastfeeding support resources

HR notifies Building
Administrator

Building Administrator or designated administrative staff provides employee with the follow *before they go out on family leave*:

- List of spaces in building where they can pump
- Verbal or written plan for coverage of break times for pumping (i.e. schedule adjustments, employee or admin. cover classroom)

Building
Administrator notifies
Building Support Staff

Building Support Staff (school nurse, another employee, etc.) meets with employee:

- *before they go out on family leave*
- within first 10 days after returning to work
- within 30 days after return to work

To provide support (i.e. connect with other experienced breastfeeding employee members in the building, provide local

If breastfeeding employee needs additional support or assistance, they are to contact:

1. Building Administrator
2. District HR

Optional Employee Handbook Language: Lactation Accommodations

The board recognizes that it is important for mothers to have the option and ability to express milk in the workplace and that Kansas and federal law encourages this practice. Therefore, the board directs the superintendent to take measures to ensure district employees who are nursing mothers be provided with an adequate location for the expression of milk and reasonable break times for doing so for at least one year after the birth of the employee's child.

The superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall see that the district makes a reasonable effort to provide a place, other than a restroom, which is shielded from view, free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, and may be used by the employee to express milk during this timeframe.

Employees must give their supervisor notice of the need for lactation accommodations, preferably prior to return to work following the birth of the employee's child(ren), to allow supervisors the opportunity to establish a location and to attempt to work out scheduling issues. Employees utilizing these accommodations are also responsible for maintaining the designated area by wiping utilized surfaces with disinfectant wipes after each use so the area is clean for the next user.

No employee shall be discriminated against for expressing milk during the work day, and reasonable effort will be made by the employee's supervisor to provide flexibility in the employee's work schedule in consideration of the requirements of the staff member's responsibilities and the availability of staff members to cover those duties, as necessary.

Employees shall use usual break and meal periods for expressing milk, when possible. If additional time is needed beyond the provided breaks, employees may use personal leave or may make up the time as negotiated with

their supervisors. Federal law does not require the district to compensate non-exempt staff members for work time spent expressing milk.

KASB Optional Employee Handbook Recommendation – 6/17

NOTE: *The location selected for this purpose should have an electrical outlet or access to electricity through the provision of extension cord(s); proximity to clean water; adequate lighting; a chair and a small table, counter, or other flat surface for the employee's use; and either a door equipped with a functional lock or a sign the employee may post on the exterior of the location advising that it is in use and not accessible.*

Let's give her a break...

Healthy Employees.

Healthy Babies.

Healthy District.

We are proud to support our breastfeeding employees.

Benefits to our district include:

- Fewer sick days for breastfeeding employees
- Lower health care costs
- Lower staff turnover
- Positive image of a family friendly employer



**The BUSINESS CASE for
BREASTFEEDING**

STEPS FOR CREATING A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKSITE

KansasBusinessCase.com

The Business Case for Breastfeeding is a national initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau, and the HHS Office on Women's Health. Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition is a partner in this national initiative.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SUCCESS STORY



SUMMARY:

Fort Scott USD 234 worked with the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) to implement a districtwide policy to formalize their support for their employees who breastfeed. The school district moved to a proactive approach to providing support to breastfeeding staff which has previously been provided upon employee request. USD 234 is building a culture that supports breastfeeding employees to be able to return to work with ease and reach their breastfeeding goals. USD 234 has secured their position in the community as a family-friendly employer and improved the health of their employees and their employees' children along the way.

"With the addition of many young female staff to our district, our new lactation policy will benefit these women returning to work following maternity leave. It is important to show that our administration supports a mother's choice to breastfeed by providing the time and space needed to express milk at work."

Pam Brown
District Wellness Coordinator
Fort Scott USD 234

CHALLENGE:

Reducing costs while continuing to support staff is a concern for most Unified School Districts. Districts are looking for innovative strategies to address the following costly human resource expenses.

- **Turnover of quality faculty and staff**— many school districts are faced each year with replacing quality teachers and key staff members who did not return from maternity leave because they didn't know if they could manage returning to work and continuing to provide breast milk for their baby. Replacing teachers and staff takes time and resources away from the classroom.
- **Absenteeism**— finding last-minute coverage for an employee or teacher who has called in with a sick child is problematic for districts, not to mention the resources it takes away from the classroom.
- **Rising healthcare costs**— rising health care costs are a concern for all employers and school districts are no exception. Many districts are looking for ways to reduce costs.
- **Recruitment of high-quality faculty and staff**— districts are looking for low-cost easy-to-implement strategies to attract quality teachers and staff in a competitive job market.

Districts are also struggling to provide consistent, districtwide support for their breastfeeding staff, which is effective at reducing the HR costs above. A 2017 survey of over 160 Kansas school districts showed most left the matter to building administrators to provide accommodations when asked for them by breastfeeding staff. This informal "when she asks" approach presents the following challenges:

- *Missed opportunities for providing support.* Some employees simply will not ask due to embarrassment or not wanting to ask for what they perceive as special accommodations.
- *Inconsistent implementation.* Dependent upon informed and supportive building administrators and supervisors.

SOLUTION:

USD 234 was first prompted to look into developing a district breastfeeding support policy through their work with WorkWell Kansas who in part encourages worksites to develop policies that support breastfeeding employees.

The school nurse, who is also the wellness coordinator, took the initiative in this project. She obtained the superintendent's support who then asked all building administrators to tour their buildings with the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) Executive Director to identify spaces for staff to pump during the workday. Without exception, all school principals were openly supportive of their breastfeeding employees and had identified suitable spaces for pumping. Creative use of existing spaces was the key to finding a place in each building for employees to pump, and in most cases empty offices, conference rooms and classrooms were often used by employees for pumping.

The KBC advised the building administrators about creative solutions for staff coverage and ways to get coworkers on board. USD 234 adopted a lactation policy and incorporated lactation support spaces into their high school remodeling project.

RESULTS:

Fort Scott USD 234 can expect a 3:1 return on investment in supporting their breastfeeding employees based on results from other industries through the following evidence-based savings:

- **Lower Absenteeism Rates**— One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants¹. Mothers and fathers of breastfed infants typically spend more time at work rather than taking leave to care for sick children.
- **Higher Retention Rates**— A study² of several companies with lactation support programs showed that they retained 94.2 percent of their employees after maternity leave, compared with the national average of only 59 percent.
- **Lower Healthcare Costs**— Breastfeeding provides protection against breast cancer, ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes³. It is also associated with improved maternal mental health. The insurance company CIGNA conducted a two-year study of 343 employees who participated in their lactation support program, and found that the program resulted in an annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses, 62 percent fewer prescriptions, and \$60,000 savings in reduced absenteeism rates⁴.
- **Improved Recruitment**— Women seeking employment consider workplace lactation support an attractive employee benefit. Over 88 percent of women in Kansas choose to breastfeed and they are looking for employers who support that decision.



Sharing a room at USD 234

Not only does a workplace lactation support policy save school districts money and improve the health and wellbeing of their employees, it's the law. The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom place to pump for their non-exempt employees. Having a written policy can help school districts comply with the federal law on this issue.

Fort Scott USD 234 received the Gold-level Breastfeeding Employee Support Award in 2017 from the KBC in recognition of their comprehensive support of their breastfeeding employees.

Their commitment to supporting breastfeeding employees goes beyond the importance of breastfeeding and staff support: it is an investment in the health of the community.



SUSTAINING SUCCESS:

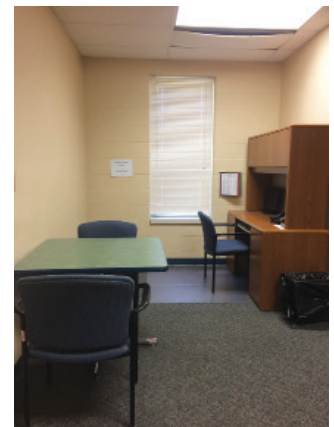
Having a written districtwide policy is key to the sustainability and success of the school district's lactation support program.

A written policy ensures:

- All district leaders, now and in the future, will have a clear understanding of how to support breastfeeding employees and will be able to continue the excellent work that has been started.
- Consistent support will be offered to all employees who breastfeed within the district. When implementation is left solely to individual building administrators who may or may not be knowledgeable about the needs of breastfeeding employees, support may be inadequate.
- Employees will be proactively informed of the district's support accommodations, avoiding the "when she asks" approach and increasing the likelihood that breastfeeding staff will access these resources.

The KBC commits to helping all Kansas school districts to implement a lactation support program and join the growing list of award-winning districts in our state. The KBC has created the following resources to help school districts based on work with over 15 districts.

- Employee Handbook language
- Communication flow charts
- Posters for breakrooms
- New hire orientation materials
- Handouts for building administrators



Middle School room at USD 234

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY:

- Adopt a written policy or procedure to support breastfeeding employees. Add it to the employee handbook.
- Communicate the policy to women during the maternity leave meeting—don't wait for the employee to ask for accommodations.
- Be creative to find coverage if needed for employees needing to take time to pump during the workday.
- Gain knowledge of resources available for breastfeeding women within your community. Share them with your expecting colleagues.

¹ Cohen R, Mrtek MB & Mrtek RG. (1995). Comparison of breast of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an breastfeeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. employer-sponsored lactation program. *Pediatric Nursing, American Journal of Health Promotion*, 10 (2), 148-153.

² Ortiz J., McGilligan K., Kelly P. (2004). Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program. *Pediatr Nurs*; 30:111-119.

³ Victora, Cesar G et al., Breastfeeding in the 21st century: epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect, *The Lancet*, Volume 387, Issue 10017, 475 - 490

⁴ Dickson V, Hawkes C, Slusser W, Lange L, & Cohen R. male-focused breastfeeding promotion corporate lactation (2000). The positive impact of a corporate lactation program on breastfeeding initiation and duration rates: help for the working mother. Unpublished manuscript. Presented at the Annual Seminar for Physicians, co-sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and La Leche League International, on July 21, 2000.



Kansas
Breastfeeding
Coalition, Inc.

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SCHOOL DISTRICT SUCCESS STORY



SUMMARY:

Lawrence USD 497 worked with the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) to implement a districtwide policy to formalize their support for their employees who breastfeed. The school district moved to a proactive approach to providing support to breastfeeding staff which has previously been provided upon employee request. USD 497 is building a culture that supports breastfeeding employees to be able to return to work with ease and reach their breastfeeding goals. USD 497 has secured their position in the community as a family-friendly employer and improved the health of their employees and their employees' children along the way.

"It is vital for a school district to support nursing mothers. Kids are our business. We know that the benefits of breastfeeding extend well beyond basic nutrition. In addition to containing essential vitamins and nutrients, breast milk is also packed with disease-fighting agents that protect the baby from illness. We are a business comprised of a large number of women. It is our hope that by providing a plan and a safe place for our new mothers, they will feel supported and comfortable in order to balance the care for their children while continuing their career."

Denise Johnson
District Wellness Coordinator
Lawrence USD 497

CHALLENGE:

Reducing costs while continuing to support staff is a concern for most Unified School Districts. Districts are looking for innovative strategies to address the following costly human resource expenses.

- **Turnover of quality faculty and staff**— many school districts are faced each year with replacing quality teachers and key staff members who did not return from maternity leave because they didn't know if they could manage returning to work and continuing to provide breast milk for their baby. Replacing teachers and staff takes time and resources away from the classroom.
- **Absenteeism**— finding last-minute coverage for an employee or teacher who has called in with a sick child is problematic for districts, not to mention the resources it takes away from the classroom.
- **Rising healthcare costs**— rising health care costs are a concern for all employers and school districts are no exception. Many districts are looking for ways to reduce costs.
- **Recruitment of high-quality faculty and staff**— districts are looking for low-cost easy-to-implement strategies to attract quality teachers and staff in a competitive job market.

Districts are also struggling to provide consistent, district-wide support for their breastfeeding staff, which is effective at reducing the HR costs above. A 2017 survey of over 160 Kansas school districts showed most left the matter to building administrators to provide accommodations when asked for them by breastfeeding staff. This informal "when she asks" approach presents the following challenges:

- *Missed opportunities for providing support.* Some employees simply will not ask due to embarrassment or not wanting to ask for what they perceive as special accommodations.
- *Inconsistent implementation.* Dependent upon informed and supportive building administrators and supervisors.

SOLUTION:

The district wellness coordinator was responsible for the implementation of the district's lactation support policy. She asked the wellness coordinator in each of USD 497's 25 buildings to send photos of the spaces they had identified that were suitable for pumping. These photos are shared on the district's employee website to allow traveling employees to locate the lactation spaces in any USD 497 building. Creative use of spaces was the key to finding a place in each building for employees to pump, and in most cases empty offices, conference rooms and classrooms were often used by employees for pumping.

The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition (KBC) helped USD 497 develop a communication flow chart to manage the seamless support for breastfeeding employees from their initial FMLA meeting through their first month back at work. The district's policy is communicated to new hires at orientation and is a part of their employee benefits and wellness webpages. Since USD 497 is a large district with over 1,800 employees in 25 buildings, it was important that they developed a communication plan that included HR staff, building administrators and building-level wellness coordinators. Handouts about the new policy were created for building administrators to use who may not be comfortable discussing breastfeeding with employees.

The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor from the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department provided support and connection to local breastfeeding resources. The local health department will continue to provide support to school district employees who need help with breastfeeding.

RESULTS:

Lawrence USD 497 can expect a 3:1 return on investment in supporting their breastfeeding employees based on results from other industries through the following evidence-based savings:

- **Lower Absenteeism Rates**—One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants¹. Mothers and fathers of breastfed infants typically spend more time at work rather than taking time off to care for sick children.
- **Higher Retention Rates**—A study² of several companies with lactation support programs showed that they retained 94.2 percent of their employees after maternity leave, compared with the national average of only 59 percent.
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- **Improved Recruitment**—women seeking employment consider workplace lactation support an attractive employee benefit. Over 88 percent of women in Kansas choose to breastfeed and they are looking for employers who support that decision.



Broken Arrow Elementary School,
Space for pumping, USD 497

Not only does a workplace lactation support policy save school districts money and improve the health and wellbeing of their employees, it's the law. The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private, non-bathroom place to pump for their non-exempt employees. Having a written policy can help school districts comply with the federal law on this issue.

Lawrence USD 497 received the Gold-level Breastfeeding Employee Support Award in 2018 from the KBC in recognition of their comprehensive support of their breastfeeding employees.

Their commitment to supporting breastfeeding employees goes beyond the importance of breastfeeding and staff support: it is an investment in the health of the community.



SUSTAINING SUCCESS:

Having a written districtwide policy is key to the sustainability and success of the school district's lactation support program.

A written policy ensures:

- All district leaders, now and in the future, will have a clear understanding of how to support breastfeeding employees and will be able to continue the excellent work that has been started.
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Free State High School Lactation
Room, USD 497

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