

## Press Clippings 08/05/21

---

### ---Daily Herald---08/05/2021

#### One teen dead, three others injured in Bartlett crash

By Alexa Jurado



Updated 8/4/2021 5:48 PM

A 16-year-old boy was killed and three teens were injured in a one-car crash in Bartlett, authorities said Wednesday.

The Cook County medical examiner's office said Alex E. Czerwik of Bartlett was the teen who died. The identities of the injured teens, all 16-year-old boys who were passengers in the car, have not been officially released by police, though social media and online fundraising pages say one of them is Czerwik's twin brother.

Bartlett police say they were called to the intersection of Newport Lane and Devon Avenue for a crash at 9:15 p.m. Tuesday. The car was heading west on Devon from Newport Boulevard, just to the east of Newport Lane, when it struck a curb, a speed limit sign and a utility pole before rolling over onto its roof.

Alex, who was sitting in the front passenger seat, died at the scene from his injuries, police said. All four occupants had to be extricated from the car.

Two teens suffered life-threatening injuries. One was taken to St. Alexius Medical Center in Hoffman Estates, the other to Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield. The driver suffered injuries that were not life-threatening and was taken to St. Alexius.

The cause of the crash is under investigation, police said, not commenting further.

The teens were students and football players at Bartlett High School, [according to a Facebook post by the Bartlett Raiders, a nonprofit youth football and cheerleading organization.](#)

Alex was involved with the Bartlett Raiders, the organization said in the post. He and another teen in the car had been helping with football practice just hours before the crash, the post said.

"The Bartlett Raiders family would like to send out there deepest condolences to all the families and friends who's hearts are heavy today due to the tragic accident last night involving four Bartlett High School Hawks," the post said. "This is hitting very close to home for our Bartlett Raiders family."

According to the Raiders' post and a GoFundMe page that has been organized, Alex Czerwik's twin brother, Adrian, was one of the teens injured in the crash. Police would not comment on that information.

The [GoFundMe page has been organized](#) to raise money for funeral and medical expenses for the Czerwik family.

Bartlett High School Principal Michael Demovsky said Alex was a well-liked student and described him as enthusiastic and energetic, according to Mary Fergus, director of school and community relations for Elgin Area School District U-46.

"His school is mourning him today," Fergus said.

**District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders** expressed his sadness, too.

"No words can convey the depth of our sorrow over the loss of Alex," Sanders said in a Facebook post. "U-46 may be a large school system, but we are also a very tight-knit family. Let us lift up these families in their time of need, and also each other as we process this tragic loss of life."

The district crisis team is activated at Bartlett High School. Grief and loss counselors will be available to students and staff members for as long they are needed, including when classes for the 2021-22 school year begin Aug. 16.

Devon Avenue between Newport Boulevard and Prospect Avenue was closed for six hours while Bartlett police and the DuPage County Metropolitan Emergency Response and Investigation Team investigated the crash.

ComEd shut electrical power to the utility pole that was hit. Power was restored to nearby residences by 7 a.m. Wednesday, officials said.

**---Chicago Tribune---08/05/2021**

**16-year-old Bartlett High School student dies, 3 others injured in single-vehicle crash**

**By Shanzeh Ahmad and Mike Danahey**

A student from **Bartlett High School** died and three others were injured following a single-vehicle crash in Bartlett on Tuesday night, school officials said.

Alex Czerwik, 16, a junior, was killed in the crash, Elgin School District Superintendent Tony Sanders said on social media. Czerwik was a passenger in the vehicle, police said.

“No words can convey the depth of our sorrow over the loss of this young life,” Bartlett High School Principal Michael Demovsky said.

Bartlett police Deputy Chief Geoffrey Pretkelis said in a news release Wednesday a 16-year-old boy was driving a 2021 Honda Civic westbound on Devon Avenue from Newport Boulevard when the vehicle struck a curb, a speed limit sign and a utility pole before rolling over.

Bartlett police responded about 9:15 p.m., Pretkelis said. All four occupants needed to be extricated from the vehicle.

Czerwik was in the front passenger seat of the vehicle and died at the scene as a result of her injuries. The driver suffered non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to St. Alexius Medical Center in Hoffman Estates along with a 16-year-old boy who was in the rear passenger seat and suffered life-threatening injuries. Another 16-year-old boy in the back seat suffered life-threatening injuries and was taken to Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield.

Devon was closed between Newport and Prospect Avenue for about six hours.

The cause is still under investigation.

Sanders said the district’s crisis team has been activated at Bartlett High School, including grief and loss counselors, with assistance available Wednesday, Thursday, when classes start Aug. 16 and “will remain available at school for as long as they are needed.”

Bartlett police also responded to a crash late Wednesday morning near the intersection of Prospect and Wilcox Drive.

According to preliminary reports, a 62-year-old man driving a 2009 Dodge Challenger was heading north on Prospect when he made a U-turn and crashed into a 2014 Cabo 125 scooter that had been heading south on Prospect.

The 27-year-old driver of the scooter suffered life-threatening injuries as a result of the collision, police said, and was taken by paramedics to Central DuPage Hospital.

Prospect was closed between Amherst Drive and Country Drive for about three hours while Bartlett police and DuPage County MERIT investigated.

Anyone with information on either crash is asked to call Bartlett police at 630-837-0846.

## **---Elgin Courier-News---08/05/2021**

### **U-46 superintendent backs following CDC, health COVID-19 guidelines**

**By Mike Danahey**

**Elgin School District U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders** released a message Tuesday reminding all that when classes start Aug 16 mask-wearing will be required and other pandemic-related protocols will be in place.

Sanders' words came before Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker Wednesday afternoon announced that students, staff and guests inside schools will be required to wear masks as will students, coaches and spectators at extracurricular activities such as sports, effective immediately.

In his memo Sanders said that at Monday's board of education meeting he will be recommending the district fully comply with the most recent guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Cook, DuPage and Kane County Health Departments.

He notes that all the agencies recommend vaccinations for anyone who is eligible along with universal indoor masking for all teachers, students and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.

At last month's board of education meeting, Sanders said that Pre-K through 6th grade students would be required to wear masks, while middle and high school students who are unvaccinated would be strongly encouraged to wear them.

Since then, the CDC has changed its recommendations given the spread of the delta variant of COVID-19, a sharp rise in cases and more being learned about the new strain.

**---Daily Herald---08/05/2021**

**Elgin City Council plans to continue funding school resource officers  
By Rick West**



The Elgin City Council gave preliminary approval to continue funding the school resource officer in Elgin Area School District U-46 middle and high schools. *Rick West | Staff Photographer, 2015 photo*

Updated 8/4/2021 4:40 PM

Elgin City Council members have tentatively agreed to continue funding the use of school resource officers, saying they will be an important part of the city's new Youth Empowerment Program.

The SRO program, which was started in partnership with **Elgin Area School District U-46** in 1987, supplies police officers at Abbott, Ellis, Kimball and Larsen middle schools, as well as Elgin, Larkin and Gifford Street high schools. One officer is assigned full-time to each school. The \$1.1 million cost is shared by the city and the district.

The issue proved divisive during funding discussions last year, with community and council members raising concerns that a disproportionate number of Black and Hispanic students were being arrested by officers.

Council member Tish Powell said some changes in the contract, including an emphasis on safety rather than the SROs being involved in discipline, made her comfortable in voting for the measure. It passed unanimously during last week's committee of the whole meeting, and a final vote will be held at an upcoming council meeting.

The vote came on the same night as a presentation on the city's new Youth Empowerment Program, which hopes to steer local youth, who would otherwise find themselves in contact with the police, into better choices and social services that will help address underlying problems. The program would enlist the help of local mentors and community organizations.

"The SROs are heavily involved in the Youth Empowerment Program," Council member Corey Dixon said during the meeting. "They have skin in the game with the program."

Since October 2020, the police department has been reviewing its response to interactions with youth, specifically within the school environment. The implementation of the Youth Empowerment Program is one manifestation of the review. The program, which will be operational for the 2021-22 school year, aims to decrease juvenile violence, arrests, gang involvement and high school dropout rates while increasing high school graduation rates. The school resource officers will work with the police department's special investigations unit, community members, social service providers and community-based organizations.

"I feel comfortable having our officers there, I just don't want solely Black and brown kids being the ones arrested or detained," Dixon said. "We're working on the program to help prevent that and increase communication," he said. "Hopefully we can have some better outcomes."



**---Daily Herald---08/05/2021**

**Pritzker announces mask mandate for schools, vaccine rules for state workers**  
By Marni Pyke



Gov. J.B. Pritzker is mandating mask-wearing inside public and private schools and day cares. *Matthew Apgar/Shaw Media*

Updated 8/4/2021 7:43 PM

Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Wednesday announced a universal face mask mandate inside public and private schools and day cares to combat the highly infectious COVID-19 delta variant.

"My goal has always been to safely bring all kids back into the classroom and, crucially, keep them there," Pritzker said. "Without these measures, we will likely see many more outbreaks."

"As governor, it's my duty to take immediate and urgent action to slow the spread of the delta variant" of COVID-19. "People are dying that don't have to die," he said.



School districts in the suburbs had diverged on the issue, with some making masks voluntary and others opting for universal face coverings. Emotions have run high among parents.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends universal masking in schools, as does the American Academy of Pediatrics, but "far too few school districts" were following federal guidelines, Pritzker said. He commended districts including Elgin Area School District U-46 and Chicago Public Schools, which have mandated masking, "for already doing the right thing."

"It's reaffirming that the governor has taken this position and is compelling us to wear masks universally in school," U-46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said. "If we care enough about one another, it's the right thing to do."

The new state mandate applies to students in preschool through the 12th grade, teachers and staff members regardless of vaccination status. It includes indoor sports and extracurricular events but does not involve outside activities.

Five districts that had said they would not make students wear masks, including Wheaton Community Unit District 200, on Wednesday told the Daily Herald they will comply with the state policy.

"Keeping students at school for in-person learning remains our top priority as we transition into the 2021-22 school year," District 200 officials said in a statement.

The delta variant has become the predominant strain in the U.S. and "we've seen COVID-19 cases soar by a factor of nearly 10 since early summer, and hospitalizations have doubled," Pritzker said.

"This upward movement has occurred almost entirely among those who are unvaccinated," he said. In June, 96% of people who were hospitalized were either not vaccinated or partially vaccinated, he said.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike said that "data show that the vaccines are preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death, and are effective against the delta variant."

The governor also is requiring vaccinations for state employees who work at congregate settings, such as veterans' homes or long-term care facilities, effective Oct. 4. This would include some workers at agencies like the Illinois departments of human services, veterans' affairs, corrections and juvenile justice.

In addition, Pritzker ordered universal masking in long-term care centers and urged private operators to follow state vaccination requirements.

Children 11 and younger are not eligible yet for COVID-19 shots, and that, combined with low rates of vaccinations in teenagers plus school districts flouting the CDC, forced his hand, Pritzker said.

Pushback was quick to come from Republicans who said Pritzker should leave such decisions up to local authorities.

"The governor's continued unilateral, go-it-alone approach on pandemic decision-making actively undermines the state's ability to have broadly accepted mitigation strategies," Senate Republican Leader Dan McConchie of Hawthorn Woods said.

State Rep. Tom Morrison of Palatine echoed McConchie on the "go-it-alone approach," saying it "violates constitutional checks and balances, public input, and local control."

"Our local school districts are closest to parents, students, and educators and are capable of deciding what is best for their respective communities," he said in a statement.

And Republican state Rep. Dan Ugaste of Geneva said: "It should be up to the local school districts to decide what is best for each community. I have heard from countless parents on this issue, parents who have talked to and worked with local school boards on masking their children this school year, and most all of which I am aware already resolved the issue or are in the process of doing so."

Two weeks ago there were 39,000 pediatric COVID-19 cases in the U.S., and last week there were more than 72,000, said Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital Director Michael Bauer.

"Make no mistake, kids can get really sick with this," said Bauer, a pediatrician. Masks are a simple, safe tool to protect people from COVID-19, he said.

"Someone needed to step up and take the bull by the horns and say, 'We're listening to the experts, not parents' emotions.'"

The Archdiocese of Joliet, which operates 42 Catholic elementary schools and seven high schools in seven counties including DuPage and Will, said it will follow the governor's policy and the "safety of our students remains a top priority."

"We pray for those affected by the coronavirus, and we pray for an end to this pandemic," spokeswoman Mary Massingale said.

Asked about how the state would manage school districts that might not comply, Pritzker said: "This is a mandate. We have legal authority to

enforce this. We're trying to get every child into school every day so they can learn properly."

Districts that ignore the rule would be liable for lawsuits if a child contracts COVID-19 in a school setting, he noted.

Asked earlier whether Pritzker should clarify masking requirements for schools, state. Sen. Cristina Castro, an Elgin Democrat, said: "I think it would be very helpful. You have folks doing different things. One uniform standard would be helpful."

Two major teachers' unions, the Illinois Education Association and Illinois Federation of Teachers, endorsed the governor's mandate.