

Press Clippings 11/13/2021 to 11/15/2021

---Chicago Tribune- 11/13/2021

‘A real sense of relief’: Illinois school-based vaccine clinics get shots in the arms of kids ages 5-11

By Karen Ann Cullotta; Note – This story also ran on Yahoo!News



Chicago children began receiving pediatric COVID-19 vaccines on Nov. 3, less than a day after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. (Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune)

When 11-year-old Andrew Punnoose arrived at **Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood** Friday morning, his day began with a jab in the arm that will allow him to gather around the Thanksgiving table with his cousins this month after more than a year and a half of COVID-19 disruptions.

“Thanksgiving is at our house this year, and all of his cousins, my nieces and nephews, are finally coming over, and they’re all vaccinated,” said Shinu Punnoose, Andrew’s mother.

The **Unit School District 46** school-based clinic allowed Andrew to get his first dose of the new COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. While he will need a second dose in the coming weeks, his mother said she finally feels comfortable allowing him to reunite with relatives.

“I was calling everywhere to try to find the vaccine for my son, so I was super excited he was able to get the shot right at school,” the Hoffman Estates mother of three said.

“I asked him, ‘do you want me to be there?’ And he said, ‘no, mom, I’m fine,’ ” she said.



Andrew Punnoose, 11, a sixth grader at Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood received his first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, Nov. 12, 2021. (Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune)

With the recent U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorization of the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11, kids lined up for shots Friday at school-based vaccine clinics across Chicago and the suburbs.

After federal health officials recommended younger children be vaccinated, District 46 Superintendent Tony Sanders said officials decided to offer vaccine clinics at all 40 of the Elgin-based district’s elementary schools this month.

There is no state or federal mandate for students to get the vaccine, but Sanders said many parents and guardians interested in having their children get the shots have registered for first and second doses, and submitted a consent form to their student’s school nurse.

“We decided to offer these clinics at our elementary schools as a service to our busy families,” Sanders said. “They won’t need to worry about transportation or locating a trusted provider, and their children can be vaccinated in a place that is familiar and comfortable to them.”



Board of Health President Dr. Herman Bundesen, left, gives the first polio vaccine to Susan Lehman, 7, at Mulligan Elementary School in Lincoln Park on Nov. 9, 1955. Dr. Morton Andelman assists. (Jack Mulcahy / Chicago Tribune)

While transforming school gymnasiums and libraries into makeshift vaccine clinics has become rare in recent decades, schools were popular sites to deliver polio, smallpox and measles vaccines to children during the 1940s through the 1960s, said Dr. Tina Tan, professor of pediatric infectious diseases at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and a pediatrician at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

"In other countries, school-based vaccine clinics are very common, but they had kind of gone away in the U.S., and most children these days are vaccinated at their pediatrician's office, which is their medical home," Tan said.

With the approval of the vaccine for children 12 to 18 last spring, many high schools opened their doors on the weekends to offer COVID-19 shots, and this month, dozens of clinics were launched at Illinois elementary schools, including at Chicago Public Schools, [which closed schools Friday](#) for "Vaccination Awareness Day."

"It's a great idea to take a day to make sure families get the opportunity to get their kids vaccinated," Tan said, adding that in previous generations, childhood vaccines had yet to be politicized.

“I think some people still don’t grasp how bad COVID is, and the only way to control the virus is to get vaccinated, especially as it’s starting to surge again,” Tan said.

Despite a general decline in COVID-19 cases, the rate of children sickened or dying from the virus this year is much worse than last winter, according to a weekly report by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Children’s Hospital Association.

More than 100,000 children were diagnosed as positive for the coronavirus each week for 13 weeks, and researchers are also seeing more hospitalizations and deaths of children, according to the AAP.

About half of U.S. children ages 12-17 are fully vaccinated — around 11.1 million children — according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While some parents are reluctant to have their children vaccinated, Arlington Heights resident Robert Mancilla said his 7-year-old son, Pablo, was the first student in line at a recent Community Consolidated School District 59 vaccine clinic.

The suburban district delivered 407 COVID-19 vaccine shots, with 328 pediatric doses given to children ages 5 to 11, and provided shuttle buses for low-income families who did not have transportation. Another event for those needing second doses is planned for Nov. 27.

“(Pablo) knew once he got the shot, he can have sleepover parties with his friends again, so he’s really excited,” said Mancilla, a District 59 school board member.



Emma Scholl, 10, a fifth grader at Glenbrook Elementary School in Streamwood, received her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, Nov. 12, 2021. (Stacey Wescott / Chicago Tribune)

“I’ve heard concerns from some parents who are worried the vaccine would have side effects, and make their kids sick, but my son had none, and neither did any of the other families I’ve reached out to,” Mancilla said.

“It’s definitely been challenging the last three years, first with school closures, and then masks, which was a difficult decision, but it’s the right decision,” he said.

“The mood at the vaccine clinic was very celebratory, and I think for many parents, having the vaccine available for their younger children brings a real sense of relief,” Mancilla said.

At Glenbrook school, Emma Scholl, 10, was at the front of the line for the vaccine Friday morning.

“She is a champ at getting shots, so this was not big deal for her,” said Emma’s mom, Miriam Scholl.

With Scholl and her husband, and Emma’s older brother, Nathan, 12, already vaccinated, the family is looking forward to gathering with relatives during the holiday season.

“Emma is on a dance team, and has performances in December, and we’ll be at public venues, and with her vaccinated, we’ll all feel a lot more comfortable,” Miriam Scholl said.

---Chicago Tribune 11/13/2021

Illinois schools look to bridge widening achievement gap for low-income students during the pandemic

By Karen Ann Cullotta

When it came time for annual statewide academic assessments this past spring, half of the students at **Elgin-based Unit School District 46** were still learning remotely online.

But the tests were only being administered in person, which meant many students would be unable to take them.

Like officials at other Illinois districts, Superintendent Tony Sanders asked the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver allowing his district to skip the tests — which

were suspended in 2020 — for another year. And like other districts, he was denied.

Nearly 60% of students at the suburban district are from low-income families, a sector that has been particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Many of our students who are living in poverty are from families who were afraid for their children to come back into the school building,” Sanders said. “We know the pandemic has had a disparate impact on low-income families, so we did expect it would have an impact on their children’s assessment results.”

Sanders’ concerns were validated last month, when preliminary data from the Illinois Report Card for the 2020-21 school year showed the already significant academic achievement gap facing Illinois students from low-income families has widened dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Illinois students from economically disadvantaged families — who represent nearly 50% of the state’s roughly 2 million students — appear to have borne the brunt of the disruptions to education during the pandemic, with test scores for students in grades 3-8 plunging in math and English language arts on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness.

Now, with Illinois schools slated to receive around \$7 billion in federal COVID-19 relief funding, educators hope to bridge the gap with everything from tutoring and teacher development, to after-school programs and extra social emotional support for students dealing with trauma.

Still, school officials say despite Illinois classrooms being fully reopened for in-person learning this fall, the pandemic is far from over, and academic recovery efforts continue to be hampered by students in quarantine, hiring challenges and educators who are already exhausted, just two months into the new school year.

While around 25% of low-income third graders met proficiency standards for math in 2019, that number declined sharply during the pandemic, with only 13% of third graders in that demographic meeting proficiency standards on the recent assessment.

For all demographics, third grade math proficiency dipped from 41% of students in 2019, to 31% during the pandemic.

Low-income third grade students also showed steep declines in English language arts aptitude, with 24% of students meeting or exceeding state standards in 2019, but falling to just 13% during the last school year.

The sharpest declines were found in eighth grade math, with just 12% of low-income students showing proficiency, dropping from 25% of eighth graders in that demographic meeting or exceeding standards in 2019.

Officials at Chicago Public Schools said they are using federal dollars to support pandemic recovery efforts, including re-engagement with absent or missing students, including spending \$525 million this year and next for the district's new Moving Forward Together initiative.

The half-billion dollars will be spent on research-backed resources and flexible funding that will give local schools control over how to fund programs that support the academic and social emotional recovery and growth of their students, according to the CPS website.

One in five Illinois students was chronically absent last year, missing 10% or more of the school year, with or without a valid excuse — a 21% increase from 2019, ISBE officials said.

“Chicago Public Schools is committed to investing in our students as we deal with the constantly evolving issues that have arisen as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic,” CPS Chief Financial Officer Miroslava Mejia Krug said in a statement.

“We continue to prioritize resources for communities most impacted and harmed by COVID-19 including closing the achievement gap,” Krug said.

CPS is using federal COVID-19 dollars for teacher development, intensive intervention through tutoring, additional instructional resources and expanded opportunities outside of the school day, officials said.

Federal funding is also being used to ensure a safe return to fully reopened schools, improved virtual learning and technology and an effort to support “local school-

based decisions to better meet the unique needs of school communities,” officials said.

The state report card includes data from student assessments delivered last spring at around 90% of Illinois schools, and taken by roughly 70% of students, ISBE spokesperson Jackie Matthews said.

The state-level data is preliminary as it does not yet reflect all districts. On Nov. 1, school districts received access to the school and district aggregate data for a correction period, Matthews said.

Unlike in previous years, the state is releasing the data in two batches, with the district-specific data slated for publication Dec. 2. The testing window last spring was extended because of the pandemic, running from March 15 through May 28, and some districts opted to conduct testing this fall.

Among the most-grim findings in the state report card from the 2020-21 school year are higher rates of chronic absenteeism, lower rates of ninth graders on track to graduate, and significant declines in the percentages of students across grade levels attaining proficiency in math and English language arts, ISBE officials said.

Overall, around 18% fewer students met grade-level standards in math, with significant decreases in proficiency among younger students, who officials said likely had more difficulties adjusting to remote learning than older students.

The rate of ninth grade students on track to graduate dropped 5% from 2019 to 2021, which officials said was a result of more students receiving failing grades.

The state also reported nearly 70,000 fewer students enrolled in Illinois public schools, including a roughly 10,000 decline in students attending Chicago Public Schools.

Susan Savage, assistant superintendent for instruction at Elk Grove Village-based Community Consolidated School District 59, said the district relies on data to inform their decision making for students, nearly 60% of whom are from low-income families.

“It was such a challenging time, and we didn’t even have all of our students in school,” Savage said.

“Every student has lived through COVID, but they are all in different places,” she said.

In addition to launching a new math curriculum, Savage said the district is identifying students who need extra help with reading and language arts, and is providing time for social and emotional learning at the start and end of each school day.

Yet despite the pandemic-related hurdles still facing many local families, students in the district appear to have welcomed the return to the classroom, she said.

“Students are just so happy to be back to school, even though we’re all still dealing with COVID,” Savage said. “Even with their masks, you can see the joy in our students’ eyes, and that they’re excited to be back.”

---Elgin Courier News- 11/14/2021

Nearly 600 students vaccinated for COVID in first round of U-46 schools holding on-site clinics

By Mike Danahey; Note – This story also ran at [chicagotribune.com](https://www.chicagotribune.com)



District U-46 made COVID-19 vaccinations available to 5- to 11-year-olds Friday in 13 of its elementary schools. There will be two other clinic days before Nov. 23 to ensure children in the remaining 27 elementary schools have the same opportunity, officials said. (Dreamstime/Dreamstime/TNS)

Students at Coleman Elementary School in Elgin lined up Friday to receive COVID-19 vaccinations, among the first children under the age of 12 to receive the vaccine at 13 school clinics set up by District U-46.

Many were accompanied by a parent on hand to offer a little moral support for what can be a scary thing even for adults.

Parent Tania De La Sancha said she did not hesitate to sign up her three children to receive the pediatric version of the Pfizer vaccine, which is about a third of the dose given to adults.

“I want to make sure they are safe and don’t get sick,” said De La Sancha, who was joined by fellow parent Christine Maegdlin, who has two children at Coleman.

“The vaccine helps keep people from spreading the virus,” Maegdlin said.

Claudia Serrano, who is working with the U-46 Bilingual Advisory Committee to get the word about about the importance of the vaccine and the district’s clinics, said she wanted to be with her two children as they went through the process.

“It’s a preventive measure,” Serrano said.

U-46’s first round of vaccine clinics was held in the libraries of 13 elementary schools. There will be another 13 school clinics Nov. 19 and 14 more on Nov. 23 — one at each of the district’s 40 elementary schools.

The schools are being tackled alphabetically — Bartlett through Hawk Hollow in the first round, Heritage through Nature Ridge in the second and Oakhill through Willard in the last.

A parent or guardian is required to register their child for both vaccine doses, the second of which will be done three weeks after the first at the same schools.

Vaccinations are strictly voluntary and there is no requirement that a child receive a shot. And parents don’t need to have the shots done at school since there are several other locations available, including pharmacies and county health department sites.

About 580 students were signed up to receive shots as of Thursday afternoon, according to Karla Jiménez, U-46’s coordinator of family and community engagement. Of that number, 77 were students at Coleman, where 585 children are enrolled, she said.

Parents wanting to accompany their children were required to fill out paperwork in the lobby and waited for students to be released from classes at their appointed vaccination time.

Inside the library, three people from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency oversaw a seated waiting area, took down information and weighed children. Another area was set aside so children could sit for 15 minutes to ensure they had no immediate side effects.

Other than a couple of children crying, the process moved smoothly over the first 75 minutes and no one appeared to have had a negative reaction.

De La Sancha's son, Anthony Cortez, 9, admitted to being apprehensive prior to getting his jab. Afterward, the 4th grader described the sensation as a tickle and said he won't be afraid of getting the second dose in a few weeks.

That Cortez or any other child under the age of 11 was able to receive the vaccine was the result of federal government approval that came earlier this month. It adds yet another group to those already vaccinated, reducing transmission rates and making it safer for vaccinated families to be together, officials said.

The district will not keep records of who is vaccinated unless parents volunteer the information. Schools knowing which students are vaccinated makes it easier to know who needs to be quarantined when there's been an exposure incident, officials said.

---ABC-7 News- Aired 11/12/2021

Elgin School District U-46 giving students opportunity to get COVID vaccine at school **By Sarah Schulte**

ELGIN, Ill. (WLS) -- While [Chicago students were out of school Friday to get vaccinated](#), students in Illinois' second largest school district, [Elgin U-46](#), were given the chance to get vaccinated against the virus at school.

With a congratulations certificate and a cool Band-Aid, students at Elgin's Coleman Elementary were proud of their new vaccination status.

"It feels good because, I was kinda of jealous because my brothers and sisters were vaccinated and I wasn't," 6th grader Jose Ramos said.

Fifth grader Makayla Krysiak said she wanted to get the shot "so I can be protected like everyone in my family is."

U-46 students ages 5 to 11 are being given the opportunity to get vaccinated in school. At Coleman, the library is being used as the vaccination center, though the Illinois Dept. of Public Health would not allow ABC7's cameras inside.

"We chose to do it during a school day," District U-46 Supt. Tony Sanders said. "We aimed for Friday's so students would have the opportunity for the weekend to recuperate."

Sanders said over a period of three different Fridays, vaccinations will be available at all 40 elementary schools.

Zoe Fowler said her 5-year-old daughter gets nervous going to the doctor, so getting a shot at school was much easier.

"It's super convenient, I know she really likes being at school, maybe it made her feel more comfortable," she said.

The district hopes the comfort and convenience of vaccinations at all district elementary schools will help boost rates.

Fourth grade teacher Zelma Frohlich said she looks forward to the day when her students are protected so they no longer have to quarantine.

"I just want my kids in the classroom learning the way we know is best for them," she said.

And for those kids who haven't gotten the shot yet, take some advice from the students with experience.

"Don't be scared, it's doesn't hurt, it's like 15 seconds," 6th grader Damian Brown said.

"One tiny sharp pain and it went away," Krysiak said.

Whether it is in school vaccinations or getting the shot somewhere else, the school community is hopeful that the participation rates will be high enough, so next year will return to a sense of normalcy.

<https://abc7chicago.com/school-vaccinations-elgin-schools-u-46-district-vaccines/11229897/>

---Kane County Connects --11/12/2021 IDPH: 7 Kane County Schools on Nov. 12 Active COVID Outbreaks List

The Illinois Department of Public Health is presently reporting seven outbreaks in Kane County schools.

The outbreak report was last updated today (Friday, Nov. 12, 2021).

- [*Click here to see the IDPH School Outbreaks page.*](#)

Outbreak information is reported once clusters of cases are confirmed to be linked by location and time (within 14 days). Some outbreaks are pending processing and evaluation and will be added as more complete information is available.

The outbreak information is reported by local health departments to the Illinois Department of Public Health through an outbreak reporting system.

Specific outbreaks included are those that have been identified by the local health department to have three or more COVID-19 cases who may have a shared exposure at a shared Youth Related location and are from different households.

These outbreaks do not include secondary cases that may occur in a household member who has not been at the same outbreak location.

All data is provisional and subject to updating as more information becomes available. Data are updated once a week, typically on Fridays.

The IDPH says this data includes entries elicited from cases opened within the previous 30 days from the date of the update.

Cambridge Lakes Charter School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases — Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/9/2021

Creekside Elementary (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases — Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 11/9/2021

Harvest Christian Academy (K-12)

- 6 Cases — Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 10/29/2021

Louis White Elementary (K-12)

- 6 Cases — Students
- Source: Bus
- First Reported: 11/10/2021

Mid-Valley Special Education (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases — Staff and Students
- Source: Classroom
- First Reported: 10/15/2021

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases — Students
- Source: Bus
- First Reported: 11/2/2021

St. Peter School (K-12)

- Less Than 5 Cases — Students
- Source: Sports
- First Reported: 11/12/2021

SOURCE: IDPH website

---Patch—11/14/2021

By Lynn Martin, Neighbor

Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra Opens 46th Season with Negative Spaces

On Sunday, November 14, 2021, the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (EYSO) returns to the stage of the Blizzard Theatre at Elgin Community College for in-person and livestream performances, after a season of livestream only concerts. EYSO opens its 46th season with Negative Spaces, the first of three concerts in the FLIPPED concert series that examines how

a shift in perspective can make a world of difference in music and life. EYSO, with members from approximately 70 communities, is one of Chicagoland's oldest and most respected youth orchestras. Forty-six students from **School District U-46** play with EYSO ensembles.

"We invite you to join our wonderful musicians on November 14th as they harness the power of both sound and silence in a stunning range of repertoire, from Debussy's evocative *Clair de Lune* and the iconic film score of *The Dark Knight* to Shostakovich's mighty *Fifth Symphony*," said Matthew Sheppard, EYSO Artistic Director. EYSO will hold concerts at 2:00, 4:30, and 7:00 p.m., with each concert featuring performances by different ensembles.