

Press Clippings 2/5/2022 to 2/7/2022

Fox 32

Elgin schools keep mask requirement --- 2/7/2022

By Fox 32 News and Fox 32 Digital Staff

(To watch interview with Superintendent Tony Sanders, click on link below)

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/1031920>

Daily Herald

Suburban school districts scramble to resolve mask question as students return to class --- 2/7/2022

By Charles Keeshan



Classes at Geneva High School and across Geneva Unit School District 304 are canceled Monday as district officials decide how to handle the fallout of a downstate judge's ruling effectively banning mask mandates for schools across the state. *Rick West | Staff Photographer, 2018*

Suburban school districts continued to grapple Sunday with the fallout from a downstate judge's order effectively prohibiting mask requirements for students across the state, with some declaring masks will be optional beginning Monday.

Other districts said mask requirements will remain in place for now and at least one, Geneva Unit District 304, canceled classes for the day while officials figure out what to do next.

"Our district administration continues to work with our faculty and staff to process additional considerations regarding how these developments may impact our current

mitigation strategies," Superintendent Kent Mutchler wrote in a message to the school community Sunday afternoon. "While the ruling came out Friday, the district continues to receive information that needs to be considered."

Elgin Area District U-46, the second-largest school district in the state, will continue to require masks, Superintendent Tony Sanders announced Sunday evening.

"We are getting so close with our ever-declining cases to returning to a sense of normalcy, which likely will include a movement toward masks being optional," [Sanders wrote](#). "I am asking that we continue to support the safety of our students and our staff by wearing masks for now."

Others, including Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 and Wheaton Warrenville District 200, said masks will be optional beginning Monday.

"I fully realize that this is a sudden change in how our schools have been operating and it will be met with differing responses from our school community members," District 200 Superintendent Jeff Schuler wrote in an [online message](#). "Regardless of your family or personal choice about masking, I am asking everyone to lead with kindness and respect. It is important that we are respectful of each other's personal decisions. We will not tolerate bullying or disrespectful behavior of any kind."

Neighboring Naperville District 203, however, announced it would continue to require masks. That decision came after legal counsel indicated that since District 203 was not named as a defendant in the downstate lawsuit, Friday's ruling does not apply to the district, Superintendent Dan Bridges wrote in a message to the school community.

While school leaders scrambled to make decisions, state leaders were awaiting an appellate court ruling on their request for a stay on the order lifting the mask mandate. Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office on Saturday filed for an emergency stay, saying the temporary restraining order issued by Sangamon County Judge Judge Raylene Grischow "sends the message that all students do not have the same right to safely access schools and classrooms in Illinois, particularly if they have disabilities or other health concerns."

In St. Charles, District 303 will be closed for an emergency day Monday to "implement and respond to" the restraining order's requirements, according to an email sent to parents Sunday. When students and staff members return Tuesday, the district will be "recommending but not requiring mask usage."

Elgin Courier-News

Elgin U-46 school mask policy remains in place despite judge's order --- 2/7/2022

By Mike Danahey

Despite a temporary restraining order issued Friday by a Downstate judge canceling emergency executive orders pertaining to masking and other policies related to combating the COVID-19 pandemic, **Elgin Area School District U-46** intends to stay the course with measures it has in place.

Sunday night, U-46 Superintendent of Schools Tony Sanders issued a memo saying that the district's "plan for reopening will still be in place."

"There are students who have exceptions due to being included in the lawsuit pending against the district," Sanders said in his message. "The district has already reached out to those students who are included in the lawsuit."

Students who have medical exceptions will continue to be exempt from masking, but "all other students will continue to follow the requirements of our plan," the message says.

Sanders notes that things "are getting so close with our ever-declining cases to returning to a sense of normalcy, which likely will include a movement toward masks being optional " But he is asking everyone to support the safety of students and staff by wearing masks, for now.

"I believe that requiring masks is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19," Sanders said in his message.

U-46 is one of more than 140 school districts named as defendants in litigation brought by parents concerning masking and quarantine guidance they feel oversteps its bounds. In the case of U-46, that guidance has been provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Kane, DuPage, and Cook County health departments.

On Friday, Sangamon County Seventh Judicial Circuit judge Raylene DeWitte Grischow found in favor of the plaintiffs and granted the temporary restraining order. The ruling is not a class action, but only applies to the school districts specifically named in the lawsuit.

Sanders' message notes the restraining order is being appealed to the Illinois appellate court and that there is a motion to halt the implementation of the restraining order.

However, Sanders said that the judge "recognizes the independent authority of school districts."

Sanders' message said that in August, the U-46 Board of Education approved a resolution for returning to in-person instruction that supports following recommendations and guidance pertaining to the pandemic issued by the CDC, IDPH, and the health departments in the three counties in which it has schools.

Grischow's ruling also recognizes "that collective bargaining agreements with its employee groups would also need to be considered, as those were not contemplated within the litigation," Sanders says.

Based on negotiated agreements with three unions, Sanders said, "I still have the authority to require masks and other mitigations in order to protect the health and safety of students and staff."

ABC-7 Eyewitness News

Illinois school mask mandate ruling forces districts to decide whether or not to make masks optional --- 2/7/2022

By Jessica D'Onofrio

(To watch video, click on link below)

<https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-school-mask-mandate-covid-optional-lawsuit-list/11543293/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- An Illinois judge's ruling has forced many schools Monday to decide whether to continue with a mask mandate or to make them optional.

Some school districts plan to keep their mask rules in place, while others made them optional.

Last Friday, a judge in Sangamon County ruled against Governor JB Pritzker's mask mandate inside school building, in response to lawsuits involving parents and teachers from more than 150 districts.

"Now is not the time from my perspective to be reducing our mitigation strategies," said Tony Sanders, superintendent of **Elgin School District U-46**.

While Governor Pritzker has vowed to appeal, many districts are not waiting for the legal wrangling to be over. Chicago Public Schools said it will continue to require masks, as will U-46 in Elgin.

The state's second largest school district will have an exemption for a handful of students whose parents were part of the lawsuit, but that's it.

"Based on the wording of the temporary restraining order we believe we still have the authority to enforce mask wearing as part of our local mitigation efforts, and again, the local bargaining agreements that we have that compel us to provide a safe environment for our employees to work," Superintendent Sanders said.

Many others have moved swiftly to lift the mask mandate. Some said they will continue to strongly encourage their use, others that these are decisions that should be made at home, like the Superintendent of Timothy Christian Schools in Elmhurst.

"We have wide spaces (and) large classrooms. We believe we can achieve this," said Matt Davidson, superintendent for Timothy Christian Schools. "We're seeing it in so many places, tens of thousands of schools across the country, have been mask optional all year long."

Davidson said he believes he has the support of most of his school community. With nearly 1,300 students, Timothy Christian is the largest Christian School in Illinois.

"We have kids who are really suffering," Davidson added, "and we just want to present an optional environment where those decisions for the children can be made in the home and we're going to respect them."

Also going "mask optional" are large suburban public school districts across the area, including those in Schaumburg, Elmhurst, Arlington Heights, Barrington and Wheaton, where Shannon Limjuco has two elementary school grade children. She said her kids will continue wearing their masks.

"I'm upset," Limjuco said. "I think it's the wrong call."

Chicago Public Schools and its 350,000 students will continue masking.

CPS said in a statement last week that the court's ruling does not prohibit the school district from continuing its COVID-19 mitigation policies and procedures, including universal masking, and that the district "will stay the course."

Geneva District 304 has declared Monday an emergency day as the schools work out what they will do regarding masks, officials announced Sunday night. The day will be made up on May 31.

Hinsdale District 181 schools also declare an emergency due to the mask ruling and will be going remote Monday, officials said.

In St. Charles, district officials have also decided to cancel classes and use an emergency day Monday. They also voted that starting Tuesday, masks will be suggested but not required. The board added that they encourage everyone to wear a mask due to high transmission rates in schools.

District Breakdown:

- **Chicago Public Schools:** Masks required
- **Timothy Christian Schools:** Mask optional
- **U-46 in Elgin:** Undecided
- **Barrington School District:** Masks recommended but not required
- **District 200 in Wheaton:** Masks recommended but not required
- **District 67 in Lake Forest:** Masks recommended but not required

- Geneva School District 304:** School canceled Monday. Decision to be determined.
- Hinsdale/Clarendon Hills School District 181-** Remote learning Monday. Decision to be determined.
- Schaumburg District 54:** Masks not require
- **St. Charles CUSD 303:** Masks suggested but not required
- Orland School District 135:** Masks not required
- Wheaton School District 200:** Masks recommended but not required
- Plainfield District 202:** Masks recommended but not required

The Archdiocese of Chicago sent a letter to parents and students Saturday that said they are "closely monitoring the case."

"Because future court rulings may go back and forth, and because changing our policies back and forth would create confusion and disruption in our schools, we will continue the current mask policy for now," Archdiocese officials said.

In granting them a temporary restraining order, Sangamon County Circuit Court Judge Raylene DeWitte Grischow said the mandates violate the plaintiffs' "due process rights under the law which provide them a meaningful opportunity to object to any such mitigations."

Fox 32

Some Chicago-area schools won't require masks on Monday and some will be closed after judge's order --- 2/6/2022

By Fox 32 News and Fox 32 Digital Staff

Some Chicago-area schools go maskless today after judge's ruling against the mandate

A central Illinois judge has issued a temporary restraining order that prevents school districts statewide from requiring students to wear masks in classrooms.

(To watch video, click on link below)

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/some-chicago-area-schools-wont-require-masks-on-monday-some-will-be-closed-after-judges-order>

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. - Some Chicago-area schools will not be requiring masks on Monday, after a judge issued a temporary restraining order.

Friday's order prevents 140 school districts across Illinois from requiring students to wear masks in classrooms. Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul has filed a request for an emergency stay.

In the meantime, some districts are letting students and parents know whether masks will be required on Monday:

- **Arlington Heights** said Sunday that their students will not be required to wear masks on Monday.
- **Chicago Public Schools** will continue to require masks, which are part of the district's collective bargaining agreement with the **Chicago Teachers Union**.
- **Crystal Lake** Elementary District 47 said that masks will be strongly recommended at school but not required.
- Crystal Lake High School said masks will be recommended, but not required.
- **Elgin** District U-46 will still require masks.
- **Geneva** Community School District 304 will be taking an "emergency day off" so that their staff can continue to work on how the ruling will affect their mitigation strategies.
- Harvard School District 50 said that masks will be strongly recommended but not required.
- **Hinsdale** District 181 said on Sunday they will be taking an emergency day with remote schooling.
- **Huntley** School District 128 said masks will be strongly recommended, but not required.
- **Lombard** School District 44 said masks are optional.
- **McHenry** School District 15 said that masks will be recommended, but not required.
- **Naperville** District 203 said they are consulting with legal counsel.
- Prairie Grove District 46 in Crystal Lake said that masks will be strongly recommended but not required.
- Timothy Christian Schools in **Elmhurst** announced this weekend that masks are optional indoors, but face coverings will still be required on school buses.
- Wheaton Warrenville District 200 said they are consulting with legal counsel.

Gov. JB Pritzker has requested an immediate appeal of the judge's ruling.

"The grave consequence of this misguided decision is that schools in these districts no longer have sufficient tools to keep students and staff safe while COVID-19 continues to threaten our communities – and this may force schools to go remote," Pritzker said in a statement. "This shows yet again that the mask mandate and school exclusion protocols are essential tools to keep schools open and everyone safe. As we have from the beginning of the pandemic, the administration will keep working to ensure every Illinoisan has the tools needed to keep themselves and their loved ones safe."

Parents should remember that masks are still required on school buses due to federal regulations unchanged by the ruling.

Attorney Thomas Devore, who represented families in the lawsuit against Pritzker's mask mandate, warned that he believes districts could be facing trouble if they continue to require masks.

"There could be significant liability for school districts to continue to implement and enforce requirements that this court has said violates due process of law," Devore said.

Daily Herald

Illinois AG seeks stay against mask order; suburban schools split on whether masks will be required Monday ---

2/6/2022

By Daily Herald news services

This story has been updated to note that Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul is seeking a stay to pause the temporary restraining order.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul's office on Saturday filed for an emergency stay aiming to pause a downstate judge's temporary restraining order that could prevent school districts statewide from requiring students to wear masks in classrooms.

"We remain committed to defending Gov. (J.B.) Pritzker's actions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and will appeal this decision in the Illinois Appellate Court for the 4th District in Springfield," Raoul wrote in a statement Friday. "This decision sends the message that all

students do not have the same right to safely access schools and classrooms in Illinois, particularly if they have disabilities or other health concerns."

Friday's ruling could result in school shutdowns, the Illinois Education Association warned Saturday.

"This decision has the potential to shut our schools down, effectively closing our school buildings and perhaps being potent enough to stop in person learning altogether," the IEA said in a statement. "The teacher and education employee shortage is at a crisis level. Schools are shutting down because they do not have enough healthy employees to safely hold classes even though staff continue to give up their plan time and lunches to cover classes."

Chicago Public Schools said district officials and teacher union leaders on Saturday affirmed that masking requirements will remain in place in CPS classrooms despite the judge's ruling.

CPS leaders asserted that the temporary restraining order issued Friday night by Sangamon County Circuit Judge Raylene Grischow "does not prohibit CPS from exercising its authority to continue its COVID-19 mitigation policies and procedures," including the masking edict and vaccination and testing requirements for staffers.

Elgin Area School District U-46 said Saturday that its superintendent, administrators and legal counsel are in the process of reviewing the judge's decision.

Naperville District 203 and Wheaton Warrenville District 200 also said they are consulting with legal counsel about the ruling and haven't decided whether COVID-19 policies will be updated yet.

But others schools in the suburbs quickly announced plans to go maskless. After the order was released, Timothy Christian Schools in Elmhurst decided masks would be optional beginning Monday.

Superintendent Matt Davidson said he was clear from the start of the school year that his goal was to create a mask-optional setting. While many students have adjusted to the mask requirement, Davidson said some children, particularly younger ones, were suffering and that many parents were relieved by the news.

"We have to move the narrative away from 'this can't be done.' It can be done," Davidson said.

Superintendent Lori Bein announced District 25 elementary schools will no longer require masks, but instead "highly recommend" mask-wearing. Masks will still be required on school transportation.

The district will also no longer exclude students who were in close contact with COVID-19 and will not contact trace, Bein said.

Unvaccinated staff members are also no longer required to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing, but saliva testing will still be available for those who choose to participate.

Bein said the district is continuing to review its COVID-19 protocols.

"We know that this is a sudden change in how our buildings have been operating this year," Bein said. "We want to reassure you that the health and safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us and we will send you additional information when it becomes available."

Similarly, Superintendent David Schuler announced that Northwest Suburban District 214 will no longer require masks in school buildings but continue to require masking on transportation due to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's federal requirement. People who have been exposed to COVID-19 don't have to quarantine and unvaccinated staff members no longer have to test weekly.

Schuler said that if the court's decision is reversed, District 214 will revert to its original policies.

In addition to the restraining order on masking requirements, the ruling also deemed several other COVID-19 mitigation efforts put in place by Pritzker "null and void" -- including an emergency order issued in September mandating COVID-19 vaccinations for school personnel.

Grischow's order -- issued in response to a lawsuit by a group of parents and teachers in the county that includes Springfield -- was immediately slammed by Pritzker's office as "misguided."

"The grave consequence of this misguided decision is that schools in these districts no longer have sufficient tools to keep students and staff safe while COVID-19 continues to threaten our communities -- and this may force schools to go remote," Pritzker said in a statement.

In a video posted to Facebook, attorney Thomas DeVore, who has represented families fighting against mask mandates, told viewers that any school district which continues to enforce a masking mandate Monday would be acting unlawfully.

"There could be significant liability for school districts to continue to implement and enforce requirements that this court has said violates due process of law," DeVore said in the video.

DeVore did not immediately respond to requests for further comment Saturday.

Public health experts have long urged residents to wear masks around others during the pandemic, as a means for mask-wearers to keep their microbes to themselves and slow viral spread.

Illinois recorded its highest COVID-19 case numbers of the pandemic in December and January, but infections have dropped dramatically over the past week as the omicron surge subsides.

According to CPS, about 53% of students 12 or older are fully vaccinated, and about 33% of kids 5 to 11 have gotten a shot. More than 91% of staffers have completed at least their initial vaccine series.

In the past, Pritzker has been successful in overturning similar challenges to his use of emergency powers. But for now, this ruling is significant and could impact thousands of schools.

- The Chicago Sun Times contributed to this report.

CBS 2 Chicago School District's differ in response to judge's halt on Pritzker's mask mandate --- 2/6/2022

By CBS 2 Chicago Staff

(To watch video, click link below)

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2022/02/07/covid-19-mask-mandate-restraining-order-schools/>

CHICAGO (CBS) — Some Illinois schools were sent scrambling this weekend after a downstate judge put a temporary restraining order on Gov. JB Pritzker's mask mandate.

For children at Chicago Public Schools, this ruling changes nothing. They will still have to wear masks on Monday.

A CPS spokesperson told CBS 2 in a statement that the court's ruling does not prohibit CPS from exercising its authority to continue COVID-19 mitigation policies, including universal masking and vaccination and test requirements for staff members.

The spokesperson added, "We will stay the course."

Meanwhile, the Illinois Attorney General's Office has already filed an emergency stay on the ruling to pause the restraining order on mask mandates — meaning the ruling is in limbo.

The Archdiocese announced the decision to continue requiring masks in schools. The following statement was released:

“We are continuing to require masks in our schools because we remain concerned about the number of COVID-19 cases in our schools and communities. Nationally, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, over 3.5 million coronavirus child cases were reported in January. In addition, many teachers tell us that they have concerns about working in a mask-optional environment.

Last Friday, the rolling seven-day average of positive cases in our schools was higher than at any point last fall.

Fortunately, the number of positive cases in our schools has dropped significantly over the past month. That is good news. Unfortunately, it is still higher than on any single school day last August, September, or October. COVID-19 is still being transmitted throughout our communities and we do not want our Catholic schools to contribute to that spread – to our school children, teachers, staff, or their families. We want to see the number of positive cases in our schools continue to decline.

We are studying the numbers closely and we will lift the mask mandate in our school as soon as we believe it is safe to do so. When we do, we will be confident that we are safeguarding the health of our students, teachers and staff. We look forward to that day and hope it comes soon.

In the meantime, including tomorrow morning, we will continue to apply the same mask requirements that have been in place for the past year and a half.”

Barrington 220 School District has announced it will be recommending but not requiring masks based on this decision. However, masks will be required on school-based transportation due to a federal CDC order, the district said.

Naperville Community School District 203, however, will be continuing to require masks in school. The district cited its legal counsel, saying the legal effect of the temporary restraining order is unclear, and the only exceptions made to current policies will be for named parties to the lawsuit. **Elgin Area School District U-46** will also continue to require masks in school, according to a letter from the district’s superintendent. Indian Prairie School District 204, too, will continue its COVID protocols.

Community Consolidated School District 181 has opted to use an emergency day and will switch to remote instruction.

Geneva Community Unit School District 304 and St. Charles District 303 have also opted for an emergency day Monday but will not have instruction.

“Due to the multiple interpretations of the ruling and the status of the State mandates, there is a strong likelihood that there will be disruption in our schools which will have a substantial negative impact on the delivery of instruction and the health and safety of our students and staff,” District 304 wrote in a letter to parents.

“My stance on it is that a judge made a ruling and we’ll be sending our daughter to school tomorrow without a mask. And if the school decides to do anything contrary to what this lawsuit said they should be doing, we will have options moving forward,” said District 90 parent Jason Hartrich.

His daughter is in Fulton Jr. High.

“When we discussed this with her this evening as a family she said she just wants to go to school tomorrow as a normal kid,” he said.

Their school was not one of the 145 districts listed in *Austin V. Pritzker*, the case ruled on Friday.

Now the debate rages on: What do the schools not listed in that lawsuit do Monday?

“Obviously we would be welcome to just having options as parents,” Hartrich said.

“It’s been terrible. I think a lot of parents have no idea that this is even happening,” said Jay Bionda, who has a 3-year-old and a 6-year-old in District 101.

His daughter receives extra attention in class.

“She was born premature, so she has some speech issues. Part of the reason why she goes to that school is because they give extra attention like that. She’s never been able to see her teachers’ mouths while they’re speaking,” he said.

Pushback for wearing a mask though is not the attention he wants his kids to receive.

“We will send our kids with masks because we don’t want our kids to feel the pressure or the emotional trauma that comes along with standing up in front of a crowd.

Meanwhile, a second lawsuit in the works — waged by parents — could force even more schools to create a no-mask option.

As for masking outside schools, Pritzker Friday signaled a possible end to the statewide mask mandate soon.

“I believe that we should remove masks and as soon as we possibly can,” he said. “And constantly listening to doctors and scientists and encouraging them. When can we do this? What’s the right time? What’s the right way to do it? And so very hopeful we’ll be able to make some announcements about that.”

The governor’s comment comes with a dramatic drop in new COVID cases, which are down more than 50% in a week.

Nearly 53% of CPS students over 12 are fully vaccinated. More than 90% of CPS teachers are, too.

The following list reflects school policies in the Chicago area as of Sunday night:

MASKS REQUIRED

- Chicago Public Schools
- Naperville Community School District 203
- East Aurora District 131
- **Elgin Area School District U46**
- Indian Prairie School District 204
- Community High School District 128
- Township High School District 113
- Lansing District 158
- Palatine District 15

MASKS OPTIONAL

- Plainfield Schools District 202
- Lake Forest Districts 67 & 115
- Barrington District 220
- Hillsboro School District 3
- Huntley District 158
- Lombard Elementary District 44
- Arlington Heights District 25

CLASSES CANCELED

- Geneva District 304

NBC 5 Chicago

Illinois school mask ruling leads to confusion, varied responses among districts --- 2/6/2022

(To watch video, click on link below)

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/illinois-school-mask-ruling-leads-to-confusion-varied-response-among-districts/2751051/>

Multiple school districts have opted to strongly recommend masks following a temporary restraining order issued Friday

Published February 6, 2022 • Updated 3 hours ago

At least one Illinois school district has canceled classes for Monday and many others have decided to recommend masks following a decision by a downstate judge that effectively prohibits a statewide mask requirement in schools.

[Sangamon County Circuit Court Judge Raylene Grischow issued a temporary restraining order Friday](#) as she declared Gov. J.B. Pritzker's emergency rules for COVID-19 mitigations in schools "null and void." [Pritzker called the ruling "misguided,"](#) hours after it was issued, announcing the state's plan to appeal.

As school districts across the state begin to interpret the order, different actions are being taken.

Geneva Community United School District 304 said it will cancel classes Monday, explaining implementing an emergency day is in its best interest.

"We recognize the challenges this decision may have on our families, but given the fluidity of the situation we strongly feel that this time is necessary to effectively plan for any potential impact on our students, staff, and school community," said Dr. Kent Mutchler, superintendent.

Community Consolidated School District 181, which has schools in Clarendon Hills, Hinsdale, and Burr Ridge, said Monday will be an emergency remote instruction day.

READ: Judge Raylene Grischow's full [ruling here.](#)

[SCHOOL MASK MANDATE](#) 2 HOURS AGO

"Due to the multiple interpretations of the ruling and the status of the State mandates, there is a strong likelihood that there will be disruption in our schools which will have a substantial negative impact on the delivery of instruction and the health and safety of our students and staff," the district said in a letter to families.

Arlington Heights School District 25 distributed a letter to parents saying it will be in a "mask recommended environment" - at least during the Temporary Restraining Order period.

Crystal Lake Elementary District 47 issued a similar message explaining "face masks will be strongly recommended but not required at school and at all school-related events for staff and students, as well as visitors and volunteers."

In south suburban Burbank, School District 111 will "fully comply with the court's ruling," but recommends masks be worn by all students and staff in school buildings.

Elgin Area School District U46 is standing by its requirement, explaining its Board of Education approved a resolution in August of last year supporting that the district follows recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as local health agencies.

"Within her ruling, Judge Grischow, recognizes the independent authority of school districts," Supt. Tony Sanders said in a letter to parents.

However, the district explained there are students who have exceptions as they are included in the lawsuit in which the TRO was issued.

Vernon Hills-based Community High School District 128, too, will still enforce the mask mandate, except for when it comes to students named in the lawsuit.

Others, however, are waiting for clarification before proceeding.

Oswego Community Unit School District 308 said it was "consulting with our district attorneys to further understand the impact of the decision for our students and staff."

Some districts are put in a different situation due to collective bargaining agreements.

According to the ruling, such agreements remain enforceable, like the one between Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union.

"...We expect the mayor and CPS to act responsibly and uphold our agreement to require masks — providing KN95 masks for every adult and child in our schools," CTU said in a statement. "This is what the overwhelming majority of Chicago parents and families support."

[The lawsuit in question was filed last year by more than 700 parents who alleged Pritzker's order](#) on COVID-19 mitigations in schools deprived students of due process.

Attorney Thomas DeVore, who represents the hundreds of parents, said the case is not about pushing an anti-mask agenda, but instead focused on who has the authority to make such decisions.

"This is not about masks, it's not about whether they're good or bad," he said. "It's not whether we should have them on or not have them on, it's about who gets to make those decisions and how those decisions are made."

But at least one Illinois school parent feels the lawsuit and temporary restraining order won't help end the pandemic.

"These aren't normal times," said Shannon Limjuco, a parent in Wheaton-based Community School District 200. "And we need to allow our schools to have...and use the tools that can keep our schools safely open."

WBEZ Chicago

Masks are optional starting Monday for thousands of students across the Chicago area --- 2/6/2022

By Kate N. Grossman and Dave McKinney



Masks in school have been part of classroom life since the pandemic began nearly two years ago. A downstate Illinois court ruling on Friday is forcing school districts to make masks optional in classrooms across the Chicago suburbs. Manuel Martinez / WBEZ

Students across the Chicago suburbs can walk into school on Monday without face masks after a downstate judge on Friday ruled that Gov. JB Pritzker had abused his authority in imposing COVID-19 mandates in schools.

This includes nearly 12,000 students in the state's largest high school district, which is based in northwest suburban Arlington Heights, and another 5,000 students in an Arlington Heights-based elementary district.

Nearly 170 school districts in all are impacted by the temporary restraining order imposed on Friday against enforcing COVID-19 mandates in schools, including masking, quarantine for close contacts and testing for unvaccinated staff.

[Chicago Public Schools](#) is among the districts, but officials said universal masking will remain in city schools. They say CPS has the authority to continue masking and other mandates. The Chicago Teachers Union said its agreement with the school district guarantees masking. The leaders at two other large districts also said they would keep masking and other mandates.

The head of [Elgin U-46](#), the state's second-largest district, wrote to parents and staff on Sunday that the district has the local authority to continue its mandates and that it was obligated by its union contracts "to protect [the] health and safety of its schools." Indian Prairie 204, a K-12 district covering Aurora and Naperville, also said it would continue requiring masks. Elgin and Indian Prairie will exempt the small number of students in their districts who sued to get the restraining order.

Attorney General Kwame Raoul is taking steps to prevent a major blow to the governor's efforts to keep the virus out of schools. He filed a motion to stop Friday's order, and plans on Monday to file an appeal with 4th District State Appellate Court in Springfield, a spokesperson said.

School districts heeding the judge's order are telling parents that masking is optional, COVID close contacts no longer have to stay home and that unvaccinated staff don't have to test weekly anymore. Contact tracing at several districts is stopping altogether. Changes will be in place as long as the temporary order is in effect. Other impacted districts include Barrington District 220, Mount Prospect District 57, Wheaton-Warrenville District 200 and District 300 in Algonquin.

Most districts are telling families that masks are encouraged and still required on buses. They are trying to calm nervous families.

"We know that this is a sudden change in how our buildings have been operating this year," Supt. Lori Bein wrote on Saturday to elementary school parents in Arlington Heights District 25. "We want to reassure you that the health and safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us."

Other districts are moving to remote learning or canceling school on Monday to determine next steps. These includes Hinsdale District 181 and Geneva School District 304 in the western suburbs.

Friday's ruling from Sangamon County Judge Raylene Grischow technically only affects students and staff in the schools that filed the lawsuits against the mandates. However, many school districts are changing policies for all students.

The downstate lawyer representing the plaintiffs, Thomas DeVore, said Grischow's ruling underscored how Pritzker went far beyond the powers granted to him by law.

"This is not about a mask, a vaccine or an exclusion and whether those policies in and of themselves are good or bad, which is what the governor always wants to talk about. It's about whether the law, as it's written, allows him or his agencies or the school districts the authority to do those things," DeVore said. "And she unequivocally said that they do not, and that if the legislature thinks that they should be, well, they can pass a law that makes it."

DeVore also said every district in Illinois should pay careful attention to her opinion, which said these COVID-19 mitigation mandates can't be imposed without affording due process to those who object.

"Even if your child ... is not specifically listed as a plaintiff, the judge said that this is all illegal conduct," DeVore said. "And so if [other districts] want to try to make children that aren't named in this case wear a mask, they're breaking the law, according to this judge, and there could be consequences for that at some point in time down the road."

The judge's temporary order is one step as the judge moves toward issuing a final ruling. She has made clear her preliminary views.

"The plaintiffs have due process rights under the law which provide them a meaningful opportunity to object to any such mitigations being levied against them and it is these due process rights which are being continually violated," Grischow wrote.

The judge also said the governor overshot what lawmakers allowed him to do by delegating power to the State Board of Education and local school districts.

Grischow said school districts were being forced to follow guidance "without any compliance with rulemaking. This type of evil is exactly what the law was intended to constrain."

Pritzker argued that the decision "prioritizes a relatively small group of plaintiffs who refuse to follow widely-accepted science over the rights of other students, faculty and staff to enter schools without the fear of contracting a virus that has claimed the lives of more than 31,000 Illinois residents."

Elgin Courier-News

Elgin News Digest: Counselors experience career day; Elgin High to host gaming competition --- 2/6/2022

By Mike Danahey

Counselors experience career day

More than 30 counselors from the five **Elgin School District U-46** high schools experienced their own career exploration day Jan. 28, visiting Elgin Sweeper in Elgin, Hoffer Plastics in South Elgin, and the career and technical education labs at Elgin South Elgin High Schools.

The goal of the event, coordinated by Elgin's Alignment Collaborative for Education and U-46, was to help bridge the gap between the career and technical education programs offered at the high schools and career paths in the automotive, engineering, welding and manufacturing industries. Counselors also learned about future job projections, skills required and opportunities for career advancement in those industries.

The Alignment Collaborative for Education is made up of business and community leaders from 11 communities within School District U-46 and works with district staff to better ready students for careers that may be available to them locally. For more information, see www.align4edu.org.

Elgin High to host gaming competition

Elgin High School will be hosting its inaugural video game competition from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 26 in the Chesbrough Fieldhouse, 1200 Maroon Drive, Elgin. The day will feature local gamers, high school and collegiate esports teams competing in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate and NBA2K21. Attendees will be able to play video and virtual reality games and buy, sell and trade Pokemon cards.

Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for students with ID. For tickets and more information, see [twitter.com/ESPORTS EHS](https://twitter.com/ESPORTS_EHS).

Daily Herald

The Week That Was: Districts blasted for keeping schools open in storm --- 2/6/2022

Daily Herald report

Several school districts came under fire from parents and students for remaining open during the snowstorm in the middle of last week. Two of the area's larger districts hit hardest by the snow -- Naperville Unit District 203 and Indian Prairie Unit District 204 -- remained open, as did **Elgin Area School District U-46**, Wheaton Warrenville Unit District 200 and Lisle Unit

District 202. Tweets from superintendents were met by hundreds of angry responses, some calling for firings.

Kane County Connects

Kane County History: Robert Gilliam was an ‘Elgin Guy’ ---

2/4/2022

Kane County Connects report

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KANE COUNTY HISTORY: ROBERT GILLIAM WAS AN ‘ELGIN GUY’

kanecountyconnects / February 4, 2022 / Comments Off on Kane County History: Robert Gilliam Was an ‘Elgin Guy’ / Business, Communities, Education, Events, Government, History, Nonprofits, People, Public Service, Quality of Life, WK-Communities

- **Editor’s Note: This article is part of a series on Kane County’s amazing history. Today’s blog was researched and written by Museum Educator Rebecca Miller. Photos courtesy of the Elgin History Museum.**

Robert “Bob” Gilliam was a humble man. He often downplayed himself as “a skinny little kid from Fremont Street,” but he had a significant impact on the city of Elgin.



Gilliam himself may have summed it up best when he said, “My wife says I love Elgin as much as I love her. I am an Elgin Guy.”

A Career With U46

Born in 1945, Gilliam attended **Elgin High School** where he played basketball for three years. He moved on to attend Elgin Community College for two years before transferring to the University of Nevada at Reno on a basketball scholarship.



The Elgin High School Varsity Basketball team, under coach Bill Chesbrough, finished with a 20-7 record in 1963. Robert Gilliam, #14, would go on to play at Elgin Community College and the University of Nevada at Reno.

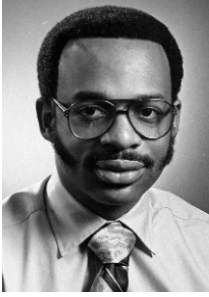
He returned to Elgin in 1968 with a degree in Physical Education and a job as a P.E. teacher at his alma mater, Elgin High School.

Gilliam’s 34-year career with **School District U-46** would include time at Elgin High School as a teacher, basketball coach, counselor and dean of students. He would eventually become assistant superintendent of human resources for the entire district.

He enjoyed recruiting teachers and especially visiting potential bilingual teachers in their own communities and sharing the exciting new dual language program being built by School District U-46. Through his efforts, the staffing at the district grew to include greater diversity.

City Councilman Gilliam

While a teacher at Elgin High School in 1973, Gilliam saw an opportunity to make a greater impact on his community as a whole. Though only 28 years old, Gilliam ran for and won a seat on the Elgin City Council.



Robert "Bob" Gilliam (1945-2014) was Elgin's longest serving city councilman and believed to be the longest serving elected official in Illinois outside the city of Chicago.

He won re-election nine times, eventually serving for 40 years and becoming the longest serving member in the council's history and its first black member. Gilliam had sought a seat on the City Council to, in his words, "get involved."

He saw that complaining from the sidelines was ineffective and wanted to do more to drive Elgin's future. And in those 40 years, he would have a role in many of the projects that came to define Elgin.

While a City Council member, Gilliam focused on the health and safety of residents. He played an important role in the construction of the new police station at Douglas Avenue, increasing the number of Elgin fire stations to seven, and the acquisition of a new public works building.

In addition to promoting vital city services, Gilliam was also the commissioner of the Elgin Housing Authority. He would serve in that post for 25 years (1988-2013) seeking to improve the operation and management of the agency.

Early in his career, Gilliam had seen, first hand, the problems that came with housing discrimination and the cost of living during personal and community hardships.

Downtown Growth



Robert Gilliam served on Elgin's City Council for 40 years. He had a reputation for fairness and a passion for making Elgin a great place to live.

Gilliam saw that a town was judged by its downtown even through times of economic recession. He knew that a vibrant downtown with destination sites was important for Elgin's future.



Gilliam was willing to admit his mistakes though and often remarked that he was glad his vote against the Grand Victoria Casino in the 1990s was outweighed by those who saw how the casino could be an asset to the community. He also saw the silver lining in his unsuccessful run for Elgin mayor in 1983.

At the close of his career, Gilliam noted he was too young and lacked the necessary vision for that role and would always see his time on the City Council as the best match for his skills.

Proudest Achievement



In the mid-1970s Gilliam fought on the winning side of a controversial plan to build a new water plant in town. The plan was bold for the time and required a great deal of confidence in Elgin's future growth.

Up until this point Elgin was relying on Chicago and local wells for its water supply; limiting potential usage to 8 million gallons per day.

Seeing that greater water availability would lead to greater manufacturing and residential development, Gilliam pushed for the construction of the new water plant that could draw water from the Fox River.

Today, the Riverside Water Treatment Facility pumps an average of 14 million gallons of water a day and allows Elgin to serve the new growth on the west side as well as sell the surplus water to nearby Bartlett and Sleepy Hollow.

Asked years later, Gilliam would always say this was his greatest achievement for Elgin.

The End of a Remarkable Career



Robert Gilliam lost his seat on the City Council in 2013 when his last re-election bid fell short. After 40 years of service, and facing a family health crisis of his own and one that affected his wife Marianne, Bob Gilliam said it was time.

It was also time for Elgin to say “Thank You.”

Shortly before his death in December of 2014, Robert Gilliam joined family and community members at a ceremony to dedicate Elgin’s City Hall in his honor.

The building now bears the name **Robert Gilliam Municipal Complex**. Inside is a wall of honor filled with some of the six suitcases of framed certificates, citations, awards and plaques that had been bestowed on Robert Gilliam in his 40 years of service to the people of Elgin.

Not bad for a skinny kid from Fremont Street that just loved Elgin.

For more information, visit elginhistory.org.

Daily Herald

Larkin's bench shines as Royals run past Elgin --- 2/5/2022

By Dave Hess, Daily Herald Correspondent

Larkin certainly boasts an outstanding starting five.

But, with the postseason a little over two weeks away, the Royals are developing a deep bench.

That was on display Friday night during Larkin's 86-20 win over Elgin in Upstate Eight Conference play at Larkin.

Reserve Adrian York scored 15 points with three 3-pointers along with 3 assists to lead the Royals (23-3, 14-0).

"It was a good run tonight," said York. "I get better every day in practice going against our first team."

Darnell Wilder, who only plays 3 to 4 minutes a game, hopes to get extended playing time.

Wilder, 6-of-7 from the field, scored 12 points with 5 rebounds and 2 assists.

"I have to play hard, fight and be ready to play," said Wilder. "I feel good about the way I played tonight."

Coach Jon Winters, subbing for head coach Deryn Carter (sick), was happy with the way York and Wilder played.

"They took advantage of their good minutes," said Winters. "They were really focused and ready to play."

In limited minutes, starter Jamarion Stubbs scored 13 with a pair of 3s.

"It was a testament to these kids they were really ready to play and we got off to a good start," said Winters. "We respect Elgin because of the rivalry. We have high expectations for the postseason. We have a lot of work to do. We have to keep working hard and stay focused."

The Royals seized control of the game from the opening tip.

Connecting on 4-of-6 from 3-point range and 7-of-10 from the field, Larkin scored the first 18 points of the game. Stubbs scored 6 on a pair of 3-pointers while Fernando Perez and York hit 3s and Damari Wheeler-Thomas and Jakob Blakley scored on driving layups.

Elgin's first points of the game came on a layup from Maddox Hallion with 2:12 left in the quarter to make the score 18-2.

Larkin's smothering defense limited the Maroons (3-20, 0-14) to 9 field goals in 35 attempts for 25%. Elgin, losers of 16 in a row, committed 25 turnovers.

Daily Herald

Bartlett knocks off South Elgin to reach 20 wins --- 2/5/2022

By Jared Birchfield, Daily Herald Correspondent

Bartlett's Conrad Luczynski was honored before Friday night's game against **South Elgin** for hitting the 1,000-point mark in his varsity career last Tuesday. But his teammates stole the limelight during the Upstate Eight contest for a 72-55 win.

Earlier in the evening, South Elgin's Caroline Croft also went over the 1,000-point mark in the girls' varsity contest, a 56-35 Storm victory.

"I was glad to finally make it," Croft said of reaching the 1,000-point milestone. "Now we can concentrate on the rest of the regular season and the postseason,"

Bartlett's Jacob Magnanao fired up both his teammates and the home crowd with a 3-point basket just seconds into the contest. The trey started a 10-0 run that gave Bartlett a comfortable 19-5 lead after the first quarter. Luczynski scored eight of his team-high 21 points in the frame.

"Jacob hitting that three to start the game was huge," said Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith. "And then you establish Conrad down low, and he went to work."

"A slow start, shots didn't go in early, and we didn't find energy." South Elgin coach Brett Johnson said. "That hurts in games where we have struggled."

Jesse Singh came off the Bartlett (20-6, 12-2) bench in the second quarter for Luczynski after the 7-foot-3 senior was whistled for his second foul and kept the Hawks in the game. Although South Elgin (13-13, 9-5) pulled within 26-16 on Elias Cole-Williams' free throws, Bartlett end the half with a 9-2 run for a 35-18 advantage at the intermission.

"A critical part of the game was in the second quarter when Conrad sat. We benched him five and a half minutes in, and I was thinking, OK here comes there run because now suddenly we are undersized," Wolfsmith said.

"Unappreciated, not by us, is Jesse Singh who game in for Conrad, throwing the ball around and finding the open man. The guards and Jesse did such a great job on the floor that we got

through the second quarter with the lead not cut down to 7 or 8," the Bartlett coach said. "Singh did a phenomenal job in that second period."

"We got Conrad out of the game but weren't able to take advantage of it," Johnson said.

Kelton McEwen had the unenviable job of guarding South Elgin's Drew Cwik. Although the South Elgin senior scored 21 points, including four 3-pointers, McEwen did not make easy for Cwik.

"Our focus was to make Drew work for his shots, and he did," said Wolfsmith. "What a great job Kelton did on Drew. He was limited to outside shots"

The Hawks outscored South Elgin 19-14 in the third quarter to have a 22-point advantage to start the last period up 54-32.

In addition to Luczynski, three other Hawks hit double digits. Ian Smith scored 17 points and both McEwen and Marty McCarthy tallied 11.

"My teammates were getting me open, and I was hitting shots which boosted my confidence," Smith said.

Josh Genz scored 10 for the Storm.