

Press Clippings 4/20/2022

ABC-7 Chicago

Metra, Chicago CTA mask mandate, more lifted after Gov. Pritzker amends requirement --- 4/20/2022

By Jessica D'Onofrio

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Chicago-area residents began their morning commute without a mask Wednesday for the first time in a long time, and public transit riders had mixed feelings.

Gov. JB Pritzker amended Illinois' public transit mask mandate Tuesday to align with the ruling made by a Florida judge striking down the federal mask mandate Monday.

In a statement, Pritzker's office said the order has been revised "to align with the ending of the enforcement of the federal mask mandate on public transportation." As a result, the state will no longer require masks to be worn on public transit, in public transit hubs or in airports.

The governor's officer reiterated that "local municipalities retain the right to establish their own mitigations, including masking requirements on public transportation."

"We want to encourage local governments and businesses to take actions that they think will keep their patrons, their local residents safe," Pritzker said.

The Chicago Department of Aviation said it will follow the updated order and no longer require masks at O'Hare and Midway airports, adding, "Those who wish continue to masking are encouraged to do so. Please be kind and courteous to fellow riders as we continue to welcome folks back to Chicago's airports."

While TSA will no longer enforce the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's masking recommendation, Chicago Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady advised travelers to continue to wear masks on planes even if they're not required to.

"I just feel a lot more comfortable when I hear somebody coughing, knowing that everybody has one on, and I intend to continue to wear it," she said.

"And I can tell you, for the foreseeable future for myself, I'm not getting on a plane without a mask," said Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot.

While Chicago COVID cases are creeping up again, hospitalizations remain low, so at this point the city has no plans to reinstate an indoor mask mandate.

CTA confirmed it will no longer require masking as per the governor's amended order, saying in a statement, "While the city continues to see low levels of transmission of COVID-19, customers and employees who wish to continue wearing masks are encouraged to do so. We ask all customers to be courteous and respectful to fellow riders."

On Wednesday morning, it appeared to be 50/50 with riders wearing masks versus those who were not.

"I'm still wearing it. You see I've got a mask on. I don't know, and I've got a baby, too, so I've got to do what's best," said CTA rider Tamia White.

Pace has also made masks optional.

"I do think it's a little premature. I know a lot of people are ready for it, but that doesn't make it the right choice," said CTA rider Bob Mason.

After the governor made his announcement, Metra issued a new statement saying in part, "Starting immediately, masks will be welcome but not required while traveling on Metra trains. They remain an important preventive measure against COVID-19."

With masks now optional on all public transit in Illinois, Brian Maher from Orland Park decided not to wear his.

"Where the hospitalization rates are going and the infection rates are going all seems to be positive. I am double-vaccinated and boosted so I feel pretty safe," the Metra commuter said.

Frاندolf Reyes from Bartlett chose to wear his mask on the train Wednesday.

"I just I've just been so used to it, and I feel more safer that way. Yeah it's just more of a habit than anything," Reyes said.

Uber and Lyft have dropped their requirements also.

"I'm just not used to being out and about on a train and seeing people without masks, but since I saw yesterday I chose not to wear my mask today," Metra commuter Alees Edwards said.

Metra commuter Dylan Mattox says he noticed many riders take off their face coverings this morning when the conductor made an announcement that they were optional, but he plans to keep his on for now.

"As of right now, I'm gonna be wearing it because I did notice in the past like two years I've gotten sick like way less than I usually do," he said.

And as of Wednesday morning, CPS and Elgin District U-46 have both said masks are no longer required on school buses.

The Examiner of Bartlett

Academy curriculum item pending U-46 board vote ---

4/20/2022

By Seth Hancock – Note: This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

The Board of Education in School District U-46 is set to vote on a pair of curriculum items for Streamwood High School's Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Action, Design (LEAD) academy at its upcoming meeting on Monday, April 25. The items were presented on April 11.

The district is transitioning Streamwood's academy from world languages and international studies to LEAD. Full implementation is expected by 2025-2026.

Starting in the 2022-2023 school year is the business for innovators course which has an estimated total cost of \$601,090 over six years: Laptops (\$562,695), professional development (\$13,280), printing equipment (\$11,929), shop equipment (\$10,920) and textbooks (\$2,106).

“Business for Innovators is an introductory business course that will serve as an overview of the major areas of business,” the proposal states. “This introduction is intentionally planned around authentic learning activities that engage students in open ended challenges and problem solving. Business for Innovators also reinforces math, communication, and social/emotional skills that are essential for student success.”

The proposal adds: “This introductory business course provides foundational business knowledge as students apply learned mathematical concepts as they relate to business, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Students will have the opportunity to engage in creating projects that are meaningful to them, the school, and the community.”

The other course is LEAD Launch, which has a projected cost of \$9,075 for instructional materials, resources and professional development.

“LEAD Launch is a seminar course that will play a key role in freshmen students being introduced to the tenets of the LEAD Academy,” the proposal states. “Students will master standards demonstrating their growing understanding of leadership, design, action, and entrepreneurship. This course will prepare students for future courses and begin to develop the culture of the Academy.”

The proposal adds: “This yearlong course will introduce students to the tenants of the LEAD Academy. Students will gain an understanding of what it means to be a leader, explore entrepreneurial mindsets, be introduced to design thinking, and understand how our actions impact the world around us.”

The district expects 60 students in the courses in 2022-2023 and 90 students a year thereafter.

The Examiner of Bartlett

Expense items on table for next Dist. U-46 meeting ---

4/20/2022

By Seth Hancock – Note: This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

The Board of Education is set to vote on \$628,352 in expenditure items at its upcoming meeting on Monday, April 25. The proposals were presented on April 11.

Included is \$210,911, from the operations and maintenance fund if approved, with Game Time c/o Cunningham Recreation for playground equipment for Elgin’s **Harriet Gifford**, Hanover Park’s **Parkwood** and Streamwood’s **Ridge Circle** elementary schools. The current playsets “are in extremely poor condition due to age and require replacement to mitigate safety issues,” the proposal states.

With Northern Illinois University, the district is seeking \$144,000, paid by the nation’s taxpayers through grants, for staff to obtain bilingual/English as a second language endorsements.

Two proposals, both from the education fund with Warehouse Direct, were presented to relocate staff offices at the Educational Services Center, which is being reconfigured. The district wants to spend \$101,271 to move financial operations from the first to second floor and \$67,156 to move the teacher effectiveness initiatives and teacher mentor program from the third floor to the first.

Also, with Warehouse Direct, the district is asking for \$74,514 (education fund) to replace 462 elementary school bench-style tables and 594 secondary stool-style tables.

“In order to replace aged lunchroom/cafeteria tables that have unsound structural and mechanical integrity issues and deficiencies that create operational efficiency and safety concerns related to the functionality of the folding tables,” the proposal states.

The district is also asking for \$30,500 (education fund) with Group Travel Planners to send 40 students from Elgin, Larkin and Streamwood high schools on a summer college tour of historically black colleges and universities in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Board member Dawn Martin asked, prior to the meeting, how the students are selected and why Bartlett and South Elgin high school students aren't included. Students must have at least a 2.0 GPA, pass spring semester classes, be in good standing and recommended by a counselor or administrator, a memo stated.

The memo added: "This College Tour is the result of collaboration between our three Title 1 high school sites - **Elgin High School**, **Larkin High School**, and **Streamwood High School**. The cost of this tour is being paid for through Title 1 funding. Bartlett High School and South Elgin High Schools do not receive Title 1 funding."

Chicago Tribune/The Courier-News Speed. Power. Work ethic. Northern Illinois recruit Cara Cruthers packs even more of a punch for South Elgin. 'I'm in a better mindset.' --- 4/19/2022 By Rick Armstrong for Aurora Beacon-News



South Elgin's Cara Cruthers (9), a senior who is hitting .561, runs the bases in a game at Bartlett on Monday, April 11, 2022. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Beacon-News)

Cara Cruthers set the stage for her future in November when she signed with Northern Illinois, but the work never stops for **South Elgin's senior leadoff hitter**.

"It's exciting," Cruthers said. "But I'm in a better mindset of where I am."

She thinks an emphasis on "trying to do things simple" in individual workouts has helped her take even more steps.

The results are simply impressive.

After hitting .425 as a junior, including six home runs for a second straight season, the Storm speedster **is doing even better this season.**

Cruthers is hitting .561 for South Elgin (10-3). She already has seven home runs and eight doubles among her 23 hits. She also has seven walks, 23 runs and 20 RBIs.

Listed as a catcher/shortstop, Cruthers is capable of playing anywhere on the field but has settled in behind the plate.

“She’s there 99% of the time,” **South Elgin coach Brad Reynard** said. “She does a good job with our pitchers, has a cannon of an arm and is such a presence.

“She’s one of my hardest workers. She’s a D-I talent with D-I speed and knows the game inside and out.”

Reynard illustrated the point in talking about a recent game.

“She was on second base with one out when our hitter sent a flare into foul territory just behind first base and Cara hustles back to tag up,” he said. “As the first baseman settles under it, everybody in the dugout yells ‘tagging’ at her, flusters her and she misses it.”

On the next pitch, Cruthers then scored on a ground single.

“A little play like that can make a difference,” Reynard said.

Cruthers, who has two older brothers, played Little League Baseball with boys until she was 10 and thinks it helped her development, especially learning to throw.

“I started travel softball at 11 but not high level until my freshman year,” Cruthers said.

After another game was postponed Monday, Reynard had to limit indoor practice, restricting it to the weight room and a workout room.

“Cara’s just at a higher level,” Reynard said. “She works out at a next level. I think she sometimes gets frustrated with me, thinking we’re not working hard enough.”

She should get her fill in DeKalb.

“Cara comes to us from the Wasco Diamonds with a solid knowledge of the game and a work ethic that will lead her class,” **NIU coach Christina Sutcliffe** said when signing Cruthers.

“She will compete to play at third, short, second, outfield and behind the plate. Cara has a cannon of an arm and a power-packed swing we couldn’t be more excited to add to our roster.”



South Elgin catcher Cara Cruthers (9), a Northern Illinois commit, looks to coach Brad Reynard for a sign during a game at Bartlett on Monday, April 11, 2022. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Beacon-News)

It's about time: Burlington Central coach Scott Richman couldn't be blamed for feeling scorned by Mother Nature.

The Rockets, who have had eight dates and nine potential games postponed or canceled by weather or field conditions, did get to play five games last week.

Burlington Central lost 11-1 to Huntley on Monday and 6-4 to Jacobs in heavy winds Thursday, but then beat Elgin, Bartlett and the host Royals 18-4 to win the title Saturday at the Larkin Slugfest Tournament.

"It's been a really weird year," Richman said. "And playing in some of the conditions some games have been played, I'm not sure we're getting a true measure of how good teams are."

Richman, who was pleased the way his team came from behind to beat Bartlett, credited freshman catcher Olivia Sutton and senior left fielder Savannah L'Huillier.

"(Sutton) has been entrusted with a very big responsibility and is doing a phenomenal job," Richman said. "Last year, we had 42 dropped third strikes. We threw some of those out at first, but we probably lost four or five games because we gave up four or five outs in an inning."

L'Huillier also delivered several clutch RBI hits Saturday.

"She doesn't feel the pressure," Richman said.

Stepping up: [Junior slugger Cici Wilson](#) and [sophomore catcher Samantha Gaca](#) have starred for St. Charles East.

In one stretch, Wilson had nine hits in 13 plate appearances with a homer and three doubles and reached base safely eight straight times.

Gaca contributed four hits in a pair of lopsided wins over Plainfield North and Oak Park-River Forest and picked off two runners.

The Examiner of Streamwood

Streamwood baseball loses three of four in week ---

4/20/2022

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood** baseball team dropped its first two games of its Upstate Eight Conference series against Glenbard East then split a pair with Larkin.

The Sabres struggled at the plate with just two hits in a 4-0 loss at Glenbard East on Monday, April 11. The bats heated up a bit, Richard Santiago (2-for-2, home run) and Nick Weaver (2-for-3, double, two stolen bases) leading the way, in Game 2, but five errors did the Sabres in after a 10-2 loss on Tuesday, April 12 at Streamwood.

Streamwood coach Dan Jennings said Kevin Lunz, who took the loss, and Carter Blanchard “did an excellent job” on the mound in Game 1, but “we struggled offensively.”

“We need to cut down K’s and put more balls in play,” said Jennings whose team struck out 13 times in the game. “Defensively we were pretty solid but had a few mistakes that cost us runs.”

In Game 2, Jennings said Eric Arroyo and Anthony Zarcone “did a relatively good job,” but four errors led to nine of Glenbard East’s 10 runs being unearned. A pair of twoout errors allowed the second and fifth innings to continue leading to a pair of three-run homers, and Jennings said “six unearned runs after two outs are not going to win you many games.”

Streamwood bounced back with an 8-2 win over Larkin on Thursday, April 14 at Larkin. Lunz went 3-for-4 with three RBI and two stolen bases, and Jacob Gama doubled and drove in a pair of runs.

Miguel Rodriguez tossed 5.1 innings allowing two runs on eight hits and struck out six. Nick Weaver threw 1.2 perfect innings and struck out four.

The Sabres fell 5-4 on Saturday, April 16 at Larkin. Weaver (3-for-4), Chris Lara (3-for-4), Rodriguez (2-for-4), Antonio Alanis (doubles) and Josh Wilder (two RBI) led the offense. Streamwood is now 3-5 overall, 2-3 in the UEC.

“Overall, I am happy with pitching and defense outside of our game on Tuesday where we made five errors,” Jennings said. “Our bats need to get going, and hopefully, with more time outside and seeing live arms outside, that will come along.”

