

Press Clippings 09/29/2021

---Elgin Courier-News---09/29/2021

1% of U-46 staff who haven't complied with state mandate to be tested or vaccinated are banned from district buildings By Mike Danahey; This story also ran at [chicagotribune.com](https://www.chicagotribune.com)

About 99% of **School District U-46's** staff is vaccinated for COVID-19 or has agreed to be tested weekly, Superintendent Tony Sanders said.

The remaining 1% are not in compliance with state mandate and are prohibited from entering any district building or school bus, district spokeswoman Mary Fergus said.

If the employee doesn't take a leave of absence or use accrued time off, they will need to resign or will be found to have willfully "abandoned" their position, Fergus said.

"Any employee who refuses to show proof of being fully vaccinated, is in the process of (getting a) vaccination or (has) conducted the weekly screening risks being considered as having the status of 'job abandonment,'" she said.

"But we are working hard with employees to avoid having to take any disciplinary action. Administrators have worked for weeks to encourage employees to provide the necessary documentation of either vaccination or consent to testing. Superintendent Sanders personally emailed each individual who was not in compliance."

The district employs about 5,900 people so 1% would put about 59 people in jeopardy of losing their positions.

Trying to make sure everyone is in compliance has been a huge challenge, Sanders said at Monday night's school board meeting.

"This was a major lift on the part of our administrative team and a big ask on the part of our employees," the superintendent said.

Monday was the deadline set by the state for every K-12 school employee to be in compliance with the state order.

At the meeting and on social media, Sanders thanked all principals, staff, departmental heads, the five unions that represent U-46 employees and “anybody who made sure we could open our doors today for all students.”

School Board member Dawn Martin also acknowledged employees’ assistance in complying with the mandate.

“I know that not everybody was on board with (the executive order),” Martin said. “I can appreciate that. I talked to families. I talked to the staff. I know in some instances it was a really big ask.”

The potential that schools would have to be closed if people did not meet the requirement would have been a real detriment to students, she said. And the board is practicing what has been preached, with all of them in compliance as well, she said.

In related action, the school board members unanimously approved spending \$66,600 to buy 2,400 self-administered COVID-19 tests from School Nurse Supply Inc. of Schaumburg.

The SHEILD saliva tests being purchased were developed by the University of Illinois and the cost is being funded with federal relief money, district documents said.

Tests are to be used by students and staff who voluntarily agree to take them but they are not yet available on every campus, Sanders said.

Because the goal is to get the test kits as soon as possible, the district is holding off on signing the purchase contract until officials can be assured as to when they will have them in hand, he said. They were supposed to be delivered last week but that date was pushed back to this week and now to October, Sander said.

Where they have the tests available, they’re being administered, Sanders said, but staff at schools that don’t have them are being reimbursed for the cost of being tested elsewhere. Any staff member who misses a mandatory SHIELD testing date will also be able use one as a backup, he said.

---The Examiner of Bartlett---09/29/2021

Mask mandates continue despite court filings

By Seth Hancock; This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Mask mandates and other regulations on students are unlawful, according to several court rulings, yet school districts and state officials continue to double down.

Attorney Thomas DeVore has brought several lawsuits on behalf of families downstate and has consistently won his legal battles.

On Sept. 2, Judge Debra Wellborn of the Eighth Judicial Circuit Court issued a temporary restraining order barring a school district from segregating students from the schools for refusing to wear a mask unless there's a quarantine order from the local health department.

Later in the month, Judge Douglas Jarman of the Fourth Judicial Circuit offered a similar ruling on Sept. 15.

“While the Children are on school property, the Defendants, are enjoined from requiring any or all of the Children to utilize any type of device, including a mask, for the purposes of allegedly preventing the spread of an infectious disease unless an order of quarantine has issues against any or all of the Children from the local health department as required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE),” Jarman wrote in his ruling.

DeVore argued successfully that masks are a modified quarantine, as clearly stated in the Illinois Administrative Code. He said in an interview with Illinois Leaks after the Sept. 15 victory that this extends to “invasive tests” and mandated COVID-19 shots.

Although these court cases apply to specific individuals, the precedent applies across the state said DeVore who is working on similar cases for teachers and healthcare workers and expects more to come across the state.

Despite that, Gov. JB Pritzker doubled down with an executive order on Sept. 17 with “Exclusion Mandates for Confirmed, Probable, and Close Contacts of COVID-19 Cases in

Schools” which the ISBE obediently complied with in a Sept. 21 order affirming the latest authoritarian dictate.

Districts also continue to follow orders.

At the Sept. 27 board meeting in **School District U-46**, a young student Everett Oldenburg said he wants “the right to take it off” referring to the masks which he said “hurt” people.

“What if the masks are making everybody sick? You think you are saving everybody, but you don’t know what masks do to people,” Oldenburg said.

Pam Zirbes told the board they are ignoring the law by keeping the mandates and noted the district has received over \$100 million through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency relief funds suggesting U46 is motivated by the money, not health.

---The Examiner of Bartlett---09/29/2021
District U-46 School Board rebuked for not listening
By Seth Hancock; This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin
and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Teachers are getting the cold shoulder from the **School District U-46** administration according to Barb Bettis, the teachers’ union president.

Bettis addressed the Board of Education at its meeting on Monday, Sept. 13. It ended with teachers in the audience saying “shame on you” as they left after the board refused to have a discussion at the meeting.

Sue Kerr, board president, said they wouldn’t ask “questions because we’re in bargaining, or we’re about to go into bargaining.” Board member Dawn Martin asked if she could email questions, but Kerr said “be careful.”

“I don’t believe I’ve touched on any bargaining issues. I am trying to deal with the moment,”

Bettis said. As the board signaled there would be no discussion, that's when teachers left the meeting.

Bettis described how the excitement at returning to school waned quickly as the district has been confusing and contradictory in its communications. She said teachers who try to address concerns are spoken down to.

There have already been resignations and talks of early retirement that are not common for this early in a school year, Bettis said.

Three teachers spoke during public comments concerned with class sizes, being evaluated by outside consultants and confusing quarantine rules. Some said students lost a lot from distance learning while there is no collaboration with the district which is not listening to them.

Two other public comments were made as parents and students also feel they are not being heard.

Ariana Oldenburg, a fourth grader, asked why students were not allowed to wear face shields instead of masks and addressed medical issues resulting from the masking, like headaches, stomach aches and sore throats. She also said there's a climate of fear if they take their mask down for a moment.

"You may think we're ok because we're not saying anything," Oldenburg said. "It's hard to speak against people sometimes. It's hard to do, even for my health."

Agnieszka Bajorek, a parent, said she has two children who have medical mask exemptions. Despite having doctor's notes on record, the district keeps harassing her to get updated notes while the district is also teaching her students, who are exempt, how to properly wear masks.

“Nothing has changed for my kids,” Bajorek said. “They still have the same condition. The previous note from the doctor should be sufficient.”

---The Examiner of Bartlett---09/29/2021
Presence of ACMs forces U-46 to replace ‘bubblers’
By Seth Hancock; This story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin
and in The Examiner of Streamwood

Asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) have been found on sinks at six **School District U-46** schools.

The district plans to address the issue with one of two expenditure proposals, totaling \$245,761, set for a vote by the Board of Education at its Monday, Oct. 4 meeting. The items were presented on Sept. 27.

The ACMs were found on sinks, which include drinking fountains called bubblers, at Bartlett, Elgin’s Channing, Streamwood’s Glenbrook, Hanover Park’s Ontarioville and Wayne elementary schools as well as the Independence Preschool in Bartlett.

The district is asking for \$27,345, from the operations and maintenance fund if approved, with EHC Industries for removal of the ACMs.

The district is replacing drinking fountains at 14 schools. The ACMs were found during an inspection at those 14 schools.

“Plant Operations would like to convert sinks within all classrooms to handwashing only and remove the bubblers in the process,” the proposal states. “District administration will have water fountains with bottle filling stations installed in the hallways to ensure students and staff have access to filtered drinking water.”

The proposal adds: “The district maintains asbestos in place per the applicable regulations and only removes the materials when repair and/or replacement is necessary. Thus, this

project will result in the removal of the ACMs present on the sinks.”

The district is also asking for \$218,416 (education fund) for replacement of VMware servers through Dell Technologies. The district has about 100 virtual servers, according to the proposal, and this will replace “the servers that run much of the district’s computing infrastructure. These new servers will have a life expectancy of five years.”

---Elgin Courier-News---09/29/2021

NFL scouts come out to watch South Elgin graduate Andrew Kamienski at North Central College. What they’ve seen is ‘staggering.’

By Paul Johnson for Beacon-News; This story also ran at chicagotribune.com



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski carries the ball into the end zone for a touchdown against Wabash during an NCAA Division III first-round playoff game at Benedetti-Wehrli Stadium in Naperville on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2019. (Mike Mantucca / Naperville Sun)

Andrew Kamienski has already established himself as one of the best receivers in NCAA Division III football history.

During North Central College's run to the national championship in 2019, the South Elgin graduate led the country with 133 catches for 2,016 yards and 31 touchdowns. The TDs set a new national record.

Of course, that caught the eye of NFL scouts. They have assured him that, no matter how this season goes, he has more football ahead of him.

Kamienski calls that a relief.

"I'm working toward a goal that's realistic," he said. "I'm definitely going to get an opportunity. It's definitely great knowing what's at the end and knowing I'll get an opportunity. I'm not so nervous now.

"I'm anxious to see where I go after this year, but our goal is to win a national championship and we're not going to settle for less."



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski (11) runs after a catch against Wheaton during a game on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019. (Steve Johnston / Naperville Sun)

The scouts came out in earnest in 2019 to see record-setting quarterback Broc Rutter. After a brief stint with the San Francisco 49ers, Rutter signed with the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football League.

While watching Rutter, they saw Kamienski as well.

“He’s gotten attention a little bit quicker than some of our past players, and there’s this gap year,” NCC offensive coordinator Brad Spencer said of the lack of a 2020 season. “The momentum just keeps going.

“It’s been busy with scouts coming in. The response has been really positive. It’s been fun for the younger guys, too, to have people out there watching.”

The only thing Kamienski had left to prove for this season was whether or not he could continue to pile up monster numbers without Rutter. In three seasons, Kamienski and Rutter hooked up 262 times for 3,754 yards and 46 TDs.

Kamienski has shown no signs of slowing down, though. He has 23 catches for 463 yards and two TDs through three games, all wins for the Cardinals with freshman quarterback Luke Lehnen at the controls.

“It’s personal satisfaction, but I’m always a team guy first,” Kamienski said. “It’s something I take pride in, working with Luke, but it’s a team sport.

“That’s the best thing about it. It shows I can play with any quarterback.”

Spencer said he didn’t think it was possible for Kamienski to improve any further. The work Kamienski put in during the lost 2020 season changed Spencer’s mind, however.



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski (11) turns the ball up the field against Wabash during an NCAA Division III first-round playoff game at Benedetti-Wehrli Stadium in Naperville on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2019. (Mike Mantucca / Naperville Sun)

“In terms of his progression, it’s staggering,” Spencer said. “He’s developed into somebody who sees the entire field. He’s able to communicate and use that knowledge to get himself open more than even in 2019.”

Kamienski is one of many NCC players who paused their education so they could come back to defend the national title. That camaraderie has this team focused on a repeat, and the national recognition shows it.

For the second straight week, the Cardinals are ranked No. 1 in the nation by [D3football.com](https://www.d3football.com), the first time they have ever been top ranked during the regular season. “It’s definitely cool to see where we came from since I first walked on campus,” Kamienski said. “It’s a big change. People are recognizing we have great athletes.”

While enjoying the moment, Kamienski also doesn’t want this to be a fleeting feeling for the program.

“This year, we know what we have, but I don’t want North Central to be good only one more year,” Kamienski said. “It’s all about keeping North Central at the top and remaining dominant. That’s the ultimate goal.”

---The Examiner of Bartlett---09/29/2021

Hawks stifle Fenton in 43-0 homecoming victory

By Seth Hancock

The **Bartlett football team** put up a dominating performance for homecoming as the Hawks earned a 43-0 Upstate Eight Conference victory over Fenton on Friday, Sept. 24 at Bartlett. Senior quarterback Jacob Scarce put the Hawks on the board three minutes into the game on a one-yard keeper, and Bartlett never looked back. Scarce finished with two touchdowns on the night, the second on a two-yard run a minute into the fourth quarter resulting in a 29-0 lead after a successful two-point conversion.

On the night, the Hawks defense smothered Fenton allowing just 92 total yards on the evening while their offense ran away with things with 332 rushing yards, led by junior Koleman Salyers’ 185 rushing yards.

“It’s always good to have a goose egg,” Bartlett coach Matt Erlenbaugh said of his defenses performance. On offense, he said: “That’s the guys up front. They were moving the line of scrimmage.”

Bartlett led 14-0 after a late first quarter 21-yard touchdown run by senior Malachi Montijo, and the lead grew to 21-0 when Salyers ran 28 yards for a score in the third. Filip Szeszko, a freshman, scored on a one-yard TD run to culminate the scoring in the fourth quarter.

In between the Hawks two rushing touchdowns in the fourth quarter, they added a defensive score. Bartlett had three interceptions on the night coming from Montijo, junior Jalen Davis and senior Bryce Kim.

Kim’s interception resulted in a 33-yard return to the end zone.

“Bryce is a playmaker,” Erlenbaugh said. “Picking that off, I’m proud of the kid. That’s our goal, to score on defense.”

“It’s my senior year. I’m not going to get another one. I’m glad I could do it like this,” Kim said.

---The Examiner of Streamwood---09/29/2021

Late East Aurora score spells defeat for Sabres

By Seth Hancock

The **Streamwood football team** came up short in a 24-17 loss to East Aurora in Upstate Eight Conference play on Friday, Sept. 24 in Aurora.

The Sabres, who were edged 284-252 in total yards, took their only lead in the third quarter when Michael Estrada scampered into the end zone on a 6-yard run and followed with a two-point conversion run for a 17-16 lead. Estrada led Streamwood on the night with 122 rushing yards on 20 carries.

East Aurora answered with a touchdown and two-point conversion early in the fourth quarter for the final score.

The loss was the fourth straight for the Sabres who fell to 1-4, three of which have been within one score including rallying from 20 points down to take a late lead in an eventual 59-58 loss to Bartlett. Despite the skid, Sabres coach Keith McMaster is still upbeat with where his team is at.

“The team has come so far with what they’ve learned, especially when it comes to dealing with adversity,” McMaster said. “We’ve dealt with up and down battles, the loss of significant players, depth issues and most recently came back from a 20-0 deficit. The kids are battling, making adjustments and believe they can compete in every game. In essence, this season we either win or we learn.”

Streamwood trailed 16-9 at halftime, Isaac Martinez (60 rushing yards) with a five-yard touchdown run and Joel Sandoval hitting a 28-yard field goal. On defense, Estrada and Martinez both had six tackles while the Sabres forced two turnovers, a D’Nico Lewis interception and a Justin Sharks fumble recovery.

“To get back into the win column, we have to stop beating ourselves,” McMaster said. “We need to minimize mistakes and do the little things right. Our blocking and tackling needs to improve, we need to protect the football on offense and get it on defense. The little things are separating us from a winning record and the one we have now.”