

From: **Ted Stec** <tstec@sd44.org>

Date: Sat, Feb 5, 2022 at 6:45 PM

Subject: Critical Information on Changes to Mitigation Procedures

To: <csorrentino@sd44.org>

Dear
District 44 Staff,

As you are likely aware, District 44, along with more than 140 other school districts in the state, was named in a lawsuit that is one of several actions that have been filed on behalf of students and staff members regarding state mandates imposed upon schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These actions have been consolidated before a single judge.

There are many details involved in this litigation. The goal of this communication is to explain what recent developments in the litigation mean for our staff and students.

Essentially, the Judge who is presiding over the litigation issued a temporary restraining order late Friday afternoon, February 4th. The Judge's ruling halts enforcement of the Governor's executive order on masking, vaccinating, testing, and quarantining for close contacts for named school districts without proper due process. This means that as of today, the following mitigations can only be recommended and not required for District 44 students and staff:

- mask wearing
- quarantine or isolation for those identified as close contacts with no symptoms
- weekly testing for unvaccinated staff

District 44 will continue with in-person instruction and other current mitigation efforts, including the ability to exclude symptomatic individuals and implement social distancing. Beginning Monday, KN-95 masks will also be available to any interested student or staff member (*additional communication will be sent tomorrow regarding pick-up procedures for those masks*).

We continue to recommend the use of mask wearing, but under the current court order, we have no ability to enforce or require such practice. This means that, absent a contrary court order, come Monday, you will have students who are masked and unmasked in your classrooms as well as colleagues.

Please understand that just as we were previously bound by state mandates to require mask wearing on school

grounds, we are now bound by this Judge's ruling.

I
will close by asking all of us to recognize that the Judge's decision will be met with different responses from stakeholders in our community. It is important that we remain focused on our shared goal – educating our students and making sure our school buildings continue to be places where every individual feels safe, supported and cared for.

Sincerely,

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