



PRAIRIE GROVE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 46

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January 19, 2022

Dear parents and guardians,

As you may be aware, Prairie Grove CSD 46 is one of many school districts named as defendants in a lawsuit regarding Covid mitigations. This lawsuit, *Austin v. Pritzker*, was brought by parents across the state against 145 school districts and the State regarding the mask mandate and the requirement that we exclude close contacts from school. This lawsuit asks for **class certification**. In other words, the plaintiffs ask that the Court apply whatever the outcome of the case is to all students in a school district instead of applying the outcome to only the named plaintiffs.

This lawsuit will be heard in Sangamon County this week and it includes a motion asking for the Court to enter a **temporary restraining order** that would prevent a school district from enforcing the use of masks and close contact exclusions. A temporary restraining order is a legal document, issued by a Court, that forces or prevents an action for a specified time frame. It is possible that the Court ruling in this case will determine, as early as Thursday (January 20), that we cannot enforce the use of masks in school by students and exclude close contacts, at least for a specified time frame.

If the Court issues a temporary restraining order on the mask mandate, for some or all students, and close contact exclusions the district will continue to implement all of our other mitigation strategies. We believe that our mitigation efforts have been effective in keeping students in school and we will continue to advocate for them moving forward. While we don't generally comment on pending litigation, we felt it was important to let our community know that there could be a decision soon that could immediately impact our current Covid mitigation strategies. Regardless of the outcome of the court case, we want to emphasize that we remain committed to the health and safety of our students and staff.

We will keep you informed as to any mitigation adjustments and the outcome of the lawsuit as it progresses.

All the best,

John M. Bute, Ed.D.
Superintendent

