

South Fork School District 14

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Home of the Ponies

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February 6, 2022

Dear South Fork Families,

We want to start by thanking you all for your cooperation and support over the past year and a half of school. South Fork School District has been able to offer in-person learning since the start of the 2020-21 school year. The efforts of both students and staff have paved the way to an educational format that offers much-needed face-to-face instruction. Many people have made sacrifices to abide by the mitigations put into place by the State, ISBE, and IDPH.

With all this being said, some major developments have come out of Springfield since school was in session last Tuesday. On Friday, February 4th a judge out of Sangamon County found in favor of several school districts that wanted the mandate of mask-wearing lifted. There were also other mitigations involved in the hearing that do not directly affect students. Since that hearing, the state has pushed for an immediate stay on the order and an expedited appeal.

The big question is, how does this all affect South Fork. This is not an easy question to answer as the state and lawyers battle in Springfield. The ruling Friday only pertained to persons and districts involved in the hearing. The judge made it clear this is not a class action so it does not apply to schools outside of the suit.

In the coming days, as the board, we ask for your patience as we work with local health officials, school legal, staff, and the district COVID-Team to determine what is in the best interest of the South Fork School District as it pertains to these matters.

Until all stakeholders at South Fork have an opportunity to review the latest news, **we will continue to follow the mask mandated issued by the state**. Hopefully, in the next few days more directives are given and the picture becomes a little clearer of what is guidance and what is a mandate from the state of Illinois.

Again, we thank you all for the support in helping students at South Fork find success

Michelle Rogers, *Elementary Principal*

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