



Bridgett Heinrich &lt;bheinrich@panaschools.com&gt;

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**Fwd: Capitol Watch: Mitigations and What Could Happen Next to Schools**

1 message

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**Jason Bauer** <jbauer@panaschools.com>  
To: Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Fri, Nov 13, 2020 at 10:38 AM

Please put this in the board packet for Monday.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **IASA** <[iasa@iasaedu.org](mailto:iasa@iasaedu.org)>  
Date: Fri, Nov 13, 2020 at 9:35 AM  
Subject: Capitol Watch: Mitigations and What Could Happen Next to Schools  
To: <[jbauer@panaschools.com](mailto:jbauer@panaschools.com)>



### **Mitigations and What Could Happen Next to Schools**

At the November 10 Governmental Relations and Advocacy Committee, members shared there was confusion in the field about different COVID-19 mitigation strategies put forth by the Pritzker administration and what will happen to schools.

On Thursday, Pritzker gave his most forceful comments yet about what could happen.

The governor pleaded with residents and elected officials to take COVID-19 more seriously and offered a grim warning about what could happen if ignored.

"If things don't take a turn in the coming days, we will quickly reach the point where some form of a mandatory stay-at-home order is all that we'll have left," Pritzker said. "With every fiber of my being, I do not want us to get there. But right now, that seems like where we are heading."

The Pritzker administration has been inching closer to this point for a while. On Wednesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health recommended residents work from home and avoid all but essential travel for the next three weeks.

Six days earlier, he stated publicly that all options are on the table.

"If the numbers keep going in the wrong direction, we will need to impose further mitigations. I think we all remember what Phase Three looked like, or Phase Two looked like," Pritzker said on Nov. 5. "Those are all things that are under consideration."

If you recall, Phase 2 and Phase 3, under the original Restore Illinois plan, meant schools were placed under remote learning.

Could that happen again for schools? At this point, that is highly possible. However, it was interesting Pritzker used the phrase "some form" of mandatory stay-at-home order in his remarks Thursday. The door hasn't shut yet.

A closer look at mitigation strategies the governor put in place months ago may also offer some insight into what happens next.

### **Tier Mitigation**

Illinois is not strictly operating under the original **Restore Illinois**, the five-phased plan to reopen the state Pritzker released in May.

That's because Pritzker **unveiled a new plan** on July 15 to mitigate the continued spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, splitting up the state into 11 regions instead of the four regions. The new plan took a much more granular approach and introduced the concept of three tiers of mitigations, rather than phases. The plan also laid out new and specific trigger points for regions to advance to the next tier.

As you probably are aware, there is a major caveat in that tier mitigations do not apply to schools. The restrictions are generally focused on restaurants, bars, meetings, indoor recreational activities and hospitals. The state is, obviously, headed in the wrong direction, with record numbers being set. And the outlook for this winter is dire. Anything can happen.

Currently, Region 5 in southern Illinois, Region 7, which includes the south Chicago suburbs in Will and Kankakee counties; Region 8, which includes the western suburbs in DuPage and Kane counties; and Region 1, which includes northwest Illinois, are all in Tier 2 mitigations. The rest of the state is in Tier 1.

### **Possible Next steps**

The question now is will the governor stick with the framework he laid out in the July 15 plan, where different regions advance through tiers if their numbers continue to get worse? Or, will Pritzker not let the regions reach that point and enact a stay-at-home order? Perhaps, there is a middle ground.

It's important to note Tier 3 mitigations are much more restrictive than Tier 2. In fact, with the exception of schools, the mitigations line up pretty closely with the stay-at-home order issued in March. Tier 3 mitigation steps include:

- Institute remote work for all non-essential workers.
- Suspend all non-essential retail; only essential retail open (i.e. grocery stores, pharmacies).
- Suspend organized indoor and outdoor recreational activities.

Those are pretty drastic measures that could curb the spread and Pritzker may decide he doesn't have to take the additional step of closing schools and enacting a statewide stay-at-home order.

Furthermore, it's important to add schools across the state, especially in Tier 2 mitigation, have already made the decision to go remote. Some county health departments are even being more vocal about the need to shift to remote learning. How much the switch to remote learning happens at the local level will undoubtedly be a factor in Pritzker's final decision.

The next few weeks, and months, will undoubtedly be a slog. My heart goes out to each of you who have been put into this unenviable position. Just remember, at some point, this will end. In the meantime, keep doing your best, focus on what you can control and don't hesitate to reach out to anyone at IASA or your peers if you have questions.

11/13/2020

Pana Community Unit School District #8 Mail - Fwd: Capitol Watch: Mitigations and What Could Happen Next to Schools

Sincerely,

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