



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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PARENTS FIGHT FOR MANDATE

Groups in Jefferson, St. Charles counties push schools to require masks

BY BLYTHE BERNHARD
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Disputes over masks in schools have flared in Jefferson and St. Charles counties, where most students will not be required to wear face coverings — in conflict with federal and local health guidelines. “There’s a lot of anxiety about sending kids into classrooms,” said Amberly Keach, whose two children attend schools in the Fox district in

Arnold, which has a mask-optional policy.

“If we are going to accomplish having all students in person long-term, we have to respect the mitigation measures that will keep our children safe in that environment and allow them to continue to stay in school,” Keach wrote in a recent letter to Superintendent Paul Fregeau

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DAVID CARSON, DCARSON@POST-DISPATCH.COM

Jamye Zoellner, backed by her son Aron Zoellner, holds up a sign advocating for mask requirements in St. Charles County schools during a pro-mask rally Friday in front of the St. Charles County Health Department. Several passing cars waved and honked in support of the rally, but several other passing cars drove past with drivers waving the middle finger. About 20 supporters showed up for the rally.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

St. Charles Jewish Festival offers community opportunity to engage with cultural traditions



Five-year-old Benjamin Lilienthal, above, of Harvester, reaches for bubbles Sunday at the inaugural St. Charles Jewish Festival outside the Foundry Art Center in downtown St. Charles. Patrons, mostly made up of St. Charles’ Jewish residents, listened to traditional music performed by artists such as Chicago’s Ruby Harris, left, and ate kosher deli food and played games. The event was sponsored by Chabad Jewish Center of St. Charles County. Sunday’s festivities followed a 2019 gathering that inspired organizers to put on 2021’s new, larger communitywide festival.

CHRISTIAN GOODEN PHOTOS, CGOODEN@POST-DISPATCH.COM

Misinformation spread during public meetings vexes big tech, local boards

Videos emerge as latest vector for false COVID-19 claims

BY DAVID KLEPPER AND HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — There are plenty of places to turn for accurate information about COVID-19. Your physician. Local health departments. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But not, perhaps, your local government’s public comment session.

During a meeting of the St. Louis County Council earlier this month, opponents of a possible mask mandate made so many misleading comments about masks, vaccines and COVID-19 that YouTube removed the video for violating its policies against false claims about the virus.

“I hope no one is making any medical decisions

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‘I hope no one is making any medical decisions based on what they hear at our public forums.’

ST. LOUIS COUNTY COUNCILWOMAN LISA CLANCY

Judge: Illinois violating rights of transgender prison inmates

BY ROBERT PATRICK
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

EAST ST. LOUIS — A federal judge here last week said that there were “serious ongoing” violations of the Constitutional rights of transgender prison inmates in Illinois “that must be immediately addressed.”

Chief Judge Nancy J. Rosenstengel said in a memorandum and order that while the Illinois Department of Corrections had made some progress

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Taliban sweep into Kabul; US officials stunned

Embattled President Ashraf Ghani leaves Afghanistan amid takeover

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, Afghanistan — As the Taliban swept into Afghanistan’s capital Sunday after the government collapsed, President Joe Biden and other top U.S. officials were left stunned by the pace of the insurgents’

nearly complete takeover of the country, as the planned withdrawal of American forces urgently became a mission to ensure a safe evacuation.

Embattled President Ashraf Ghani on Sunday joined an exodus of his fel-

low citizens and foreigners, signaling the end of a costly two-decade U.S. campaign to remake the country.

Heavily armed Taliban fighters fanned out across the capital, and several entered Kabul’s abandoned presidential palace. Suhail

Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman and negotiator, told The Associated Press that the militants would hold talks in the coming days aimed at forming an “open, inclusive Islamic government.”

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THE LATEST

AG Schmitt flip-flops on vaccine mandates • **A2**

COVID-19 vaccine shortages hit hard in Africa • **A4**

Vigil honors family killed in crash last week • **A10**

Surge come up short in GWBA championship • **B1**

Best of St. Louis: Bocce is a family tradition • **B1**



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