



Pennsylvania Judge Orders Five Democrat School Board Members Immediately Removed Over Mask Mandate

Description

A judge in Pennsylvania ordered to immediately remove from office the five school board members in Chester County school district who voted to make masks mandatory at the beginning of the school year.

In February, the parents filed a petition asking the Chester County Court of Common Pleas to remove the five Democratic school board members because they had voted to make masks mandatory in the school district last August 2021, according to a report from [WHYY](#) media.

“Once the Supreme Court declared that was unconstitutional ... we implored our school board, we asked and asked and begged and pleaded and made comments to lift the mask mandate, and they refused,” parent petitioner Rosica said.

“When they refused, that is when we made the decision to file the petition,” she added.

More from [WHYY](#):

A monthslong dispute over masks in a Chester County school district culminated Tuesday in a judge ordering all five Democrats on the school board to be immediately removed from office.

After Pennsylvania’s [state of emergency first ended in June 2021](#), the board opted to continue requiring masks. It stood by that decision while the state reimposed a school mask mandate, and for two months after the [Pennsylvania Supreme Court declared that mandate unconstitutional](#) in December.

In his order that the five Democratic members of the board be “removed from office,” Judge William Mahon wrote that his decision came after there was “no response” to the petition by

the school district or its counsel.

In the motion to reconsider filed with the court, a copy of which WHYI obtained Wednesday, the attorneys argued that the deadline for a response was actually April 4 and disputed the timeline used, which was based on the March 15 filing date of the petition to remove the school board members. The lawyers argue that the Pennsylvania statute in question gives the school directors no more than 20 days to respond. The motion asks that the court vacate the order, reinstate the school board directors, and allow the respondents until April 4 to file a written response to the petition.

District leaders and the apparently ousted school board members did not respond to requests for comment.

However, in a letter sent out to district parents Tuesday night, Superintendent Robert Sokolowski attempted to downplay any concern that the judge-ordered ousting of the board members would stick.

“The decision states that the removal of the board members named in the petition was a ‘procedural result’ and does not address any of the allegations made in the complaint. Special counsel to the district is in the process of preparing a substantive response on behalf of those school board members named in the petition,” Sokolowski said.

He acknowledged that he didn’t have all the answers but would remain “committed” to education throughout the process. Sokolowski concluded by saying that due to the ongoing nature of the situation, he would be not able to provide any additional comment for the time being.

Judge Mahon gave both parties to the case — Rosica and the district — seven days to submit their recommendations for replacement board members. He will make the final determination about who is appointed.

Read more [here](#).

By Jim Hoft

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