

Public Health Madison and Dane County: Statement on supreme court decision striking down authority to close schools

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Today, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that local health officers cannot close schools within their jurisdictions. We are extremely disappointed in the court's decision, which has much further reaching implications than just this current pandemic. This decision hinders the ability of local health officers in Wisconsin to prevent and contain public health threats for decades to come.

This ruling means that under Wis. Stats. Sec. 252.03 we are no longer able to contain a measles, pertussis (whooping cough), or flu outbreak in a school. This ruling impedes our ability to respond to any disease that might impact students, teachers, and school staff, and impacts family and friends beyond the walls of the school. Unnecessary, preventable illness may certainly occur as a result of this ruling.

Despite this ruling, Public Health Madison & Dane County will continue to provide guidance and recommendations for school districts in the county and will continue using all available tools to slow the spread of disease.

Janel Heinrich
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