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FANT LOOKS TO REGAIN HIS EXPLOSIVENESS »1CC

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NEW BATTLEGROUND

Politics inflame school boards

By Julie Carr Smyth and Patty Nieberg The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, OHIO» In a school district near the state capital, school board members up for reelection this year have been subjected to a steady stream of lawsuits and attacks, both in-person and online. In another, an incumbent up for reelection who supports student mask requirements received a letter from someone angered by her stance who warned: "We are coming after you."

A 15-year veteran board member in another Ohio district decided against running for reelection because of the escalating public attacks.

It's not just in Ohio. Across the U.S., local school board races have emerged as an intense political battleground in the Nov. 2 elections, with much at stake for students.

Parental protests over COVID-19-related mask mandates, gender-neutral bathrooms and teachings about racial history, sexuality and social-emotional learning are being leveraged into full-fledged board takeover campaigns that will get their first widespread test in just a few weeks.

"What's happening in 2021 is a prelude to some of the messaging, some of the issues we'll see going into the midterm elections," said Scott DiMauro, president of the Ohio Education Association, the state's largest teachers union.

Local school board elections typically have been relatively quiet affairs in which incumbents sail to reelection, often unopposed. This year, candidate training academies organized by national conservative groups and state-level recruitment efforts are encouraging challenges by

SCHOOLS » 6A

Judicial Lessons of the Pandemic



Judge Gary Jackson checks in with his court staffers before hearing about 35 cases that day at the Lindsey Flanigan Courthouse on July 13, 2020, in Denver. Staff members were working from home at the time because of COVID-19. Colorado Chief Justice Brian Boatright has asked a group of eight chief judges to examine when online courts work and when they don't to help develop potential long-term strategies. RJ Sangosti, Denver Post file

Your honor, you're muted

Colorado eyes the future of virtual court

By Shelly Bradbury The Denver Post

To go to court in Colorado these days, you might need to drive to the courthouse, park, pass through security — belts and watches off, please — don a mask (or maybe not) and put your seat in a seat. Or you might just curl up on your couch, power up a laptop and log in to a video chat for virtual court.

It all depends on which judge is hearing your case and what exactly you need to get done.

Colorado's initially ubiquitous use of virtual courts during the pandemic has faded into a patchwork of judge-by-judge decisions about when proceedings go forward in person or online, even as many in the justice system call for some virtual options to be preserved post-COVID-19.

The mishmash of procedures across the state follows the court system's radical transformation since the pandemic began in March 2020, with the public health crisis forcing an unprecedented shift toward remote hearings and virtual appearances — leading to increased transparency and participation in the court system, along with some new difficulties.

The state Supreme Court has yet to put out any detailed statewide guidance for how virtual courts should be used long-term, but Chief Justice Brian Boatright recently formed a working group of eight

VIRTUAL » 12A

DENVER & THE WEST

MOBILE HOME LAW NOT WORKING WELL

It was supposed to give residents a chance to purchase the land their dwellings sit on. But of the 48 sales so far, only two have been to those who live at the sites. »1B

2020 protests. Few Denver officers will face any discipline despite criticism of the department's response and lawsuits against it. »1B



Colorado State mascot Cam the Ram takes a selfie with students on Saturday. Andy Cross, The Denver Post

SPORTS

CSU OPENS MWC PLAY WITH A 32-14 VICTORY

Cayden Camper kicked six field goals — three in each half — and Colorado State beat San Jose State on Saturday in Fort Collins. The Rams took the lead early with an eight-play, 75-yard scoring drive. »1C

"It takes a village." Nuggets teammates and coaches are helping Bol Bol realize his potential. »1C

LIFE & CULTURE

"IN OTHER WORDS" SPOTLIGHTS BERNIER

Colorado artist Roland Bernier's work looks familiar because it's composed of words. But they aren't a puzzle to solve. The words don't go together or have meaning. They are just there to be appreciated. »1E

Is Meow Wolf Denver kid-friendly? Writer John Wenzel took his children there to find out. »1E

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