

Chicago Tribune



QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-TRIBUNE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2023

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

US bombs Iran-allied militia in Iraq

Biden orders strike after drone attack injures US troops

By **Aamer Madhani,**
Zeke Miller and
Qassim Abdul-Zahra
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden ordered the United States military to carry out retaliatory airstrikes against Iranian-backed militia groups after

three U.S. service members were injured in a drone attack in northern Iraq.

National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said one of the U.S. troops suffered critical injuries in the attack that occurred earlier Monday. The Iranian-backed militia Kataib Hezbollah and affiliated groups,

under an umbrella of Iranian-backed militants, claimed credit for the attack that utilized a one-way attack drone.

Iraqi officials said that U.S. strikes targeting militia sites early Tuesday killed one militant and wounded 18. They came at a time of heightened fears of a regional spillover of the Israel-Hamas war.

Iran announced Monday that an Israeli strike on the outskirts of the Syrian capital of Damascus killed one of its top generals, Seyed Razi Mousavi, who had been a close companion of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the former head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Soleimani was slain in a U.S. drone strike in Iraq in January 2020.

Iranian officials vowed revenge for the killing of Mousavi, but didn't immediately launch a retal-

iatory strike. The militia attack Monday in northern Iraq was launched prior to the strike in Syria that killed Mousavi.

Biden, who was spending Christmas at the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, was alerted to the attack by White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan shortly after it occurred Monday and ordered

Turn to Strike, Page 6



Academic interventionist Shamika Keepers works with sixth graders Milton Luter, from left, Koah Toben and Lucas Zhang on Nov. 8 at Bronzeville Classical Elementary School.

Illinois schools at financial cliff

'Something's got to give': Federal pandemic aid expiring, and most of that already has been spent

By **Sarah Macaraeg**
Chicago Tribune

Bronzeville Classical Elementary School educator Shamika Keepers had never imagined spending her days teaching outside a traditional classroom. But the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown learning off course for a whole generation of students.

Now, Keepers is one of two staffers in positions added to counteract learning loss, providing additional one-on-one instruction, often called intervention, to students in need of extra help, as well as coaching humanities teachers new to the profession or school. She also provides accelerated instruction to students in



Sixth grader Amir Dotson plays the guitar during a music class at Bronzeville Classical Elementary School in Chicago on Nov. 8. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS**

need of more challenging material.

Keepers initially wasn't keen on leaving her classroom, Bronzeville Principal Nicole Spicer recalls. But, with the impact of the pandemic apparent in students' engagement and test scores, Spicer said she "poked, prodded and begged" Keepers, a dynamic teacher with proven results, to step into the role.

"I hadn't seen myself not working solely with students. But I actually love it," Keepers said, recalling a student who went through intervention last year. "He took his assessment again this year and he's not on the list to receive intervention. ... All he needed was a little bit of extra push, outside of the classroom, on the specific skills that he needed."

Hiring interventionists is one of the myriad ways school districts have invested federal emergency relief funds since the pandemic, said school finance expert Marguerite Roza, director of

Turn to Funds, Page 4



Save the Seats 2023

Your tickets for New Year's Eve, from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" to Second City and to "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical!"

Arts & Living

Midway patrons penalized by delay of plane

Data shows airport ranks high nationally with late arrivals

By **Sarah Freishtat**
Chicago Tribune

Travelers who fly frequently into Midway Airport are likely no stranger to flight delays.

Through November this year Midway had one of the highest rates of delayed arrivals among the nation's busiest airports, with more than 27% of flights arriving late, data from flight-tracking company FlightAware shows.

Out of the 50 busiest airports

in the country, only those in Las Vegas, Orlando and Fort Lauderdale had a higher share of flights delayed. Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport had the highest rate of delayed arrivals, with nearly 32% of flights arriving late.

The delays reflect some of the quirks of the smaller of Chicago's airports, dominated by Southwest Airlines and tightly locked in a residential neighborhood. And for some of the 3.4 million holiday travelers expected at the city's two airports through Jan. 2, delays at Midway can add headaches and frustration to the trip.

Flights have been less likely to

be delayed at the larger O'Hare International Airport. During the first 11 months of the year 22% of flights arrived at O'Hare late, the FlightAware data shows.

The FlightAware data is just one measure of flight delays. For example, U.S. Department of Transportation data shows about 23% of flights arriving at Midway were reported delayed through September, the most recent month of data available, meaning they arrived at least 15 minutes later than scheduled.

That was on par with O'Hare, and slightly better than average for the nation's major airports, where 24% of arriving flights

were delayed.

The Chicago Department of Aviation pointed to other federal data that showed Midway ranked 30th in the nation for the number of delayed flights, though the data doesn't include certain types of delays and does include some airports too small to make it onto the FlightAware list.

Still, some holiday travelers have already run headlong into Midway delays and cancellations.

On Christmas Eve, as dense fog rolled through the city and the Federal Aviation Administration for periods stopped air traffic at

Turn to Midway, Page 2

