

JACKSON, HALE ARE BARRED FROM SCHOOL RALLIES

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Author: Associated Press.

Rev. Jesse Jackson and white supremacist Matthew Hale are among those banned from demonstrating on or near school grounds in Decatur.

Macon County Circuit Judge James Hendrian issued a preliminary injunction Thursday in response to last month's protests over students expelled for fighting at a Sept. 17 football game.

Jackson and supporters of his Rainbow/PUSH Coalition opposed the expulsions. Hale backed the school district, which later let the expelled students enroll in an alternative school.

The School District initially filed a lawsuit in mid-November to prevent Jackson, his top aides, the expelled students or their parents from "engaging in any activities which would substantially disrupt the district's daily operations."

The district shut down its high schools for two days as Jackson led protests.

School District attorneys added Hale to the list after he and a handful of his supporters started staging their own small rallies outside the schools to support the expulsions.

"Essentially, the school board is so anxious to prove that it is not racially biased that it has wrongfully hauled my church into court," said Hale, of East Peoria, in a statement issued earlier this week.

"The school board should be grateful that we stood with them when it needed help--not be suing us to curry a perceived popular opinion," he added.

A spokeswoman for Jackson's Rainbow/PUSH Coalition in Chicago did not return messages seeking comment Thursday.

Representatives for Jackson did not appear in court. Hale, who is schooled as a lawyer but has not received a license from the state because of his racist views, appeared on his own behalf.

School District lawyer Everett Nicholas says regardless of his own distaste for Hale's views, it's the district's constitutional obligation to keep students safe and hassle-free.

"Any group that seeks to intimidate . . . people coming into the schools prevents us from doing that," Nicholas said after Thursday's hearing.

All of those named in the suit must stay 50 feet away from school property lines.

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