



January 12, 2021

Re: Athletics & Activities Update

Rocket Community,

I hope that all families have had a safe and happy holiday season. I am reaching out with an update to the community on the status of Athletics and Activities in our District.

On Thursday, January 7th, all IHSA member schools received an email outlining an update on sports from IHSA Director Craig Anderson. Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Executive Director Craig Anderson, members of the IHSA staff, and Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA) staff members met virtually with Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Deputy Governor Jesse Ruiz, and IDPH Chief of Staff Justin DeWitt on the evening of January 6, 2021.

"We appreciate the dialogue with state leadership and believe it is crucial that it continue moving forward," said IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson. "We understand that the state faces shifting priorities as it continues to fight the pandemic, while also beginning the distribution of the vaccine. There was no expectation that a single meeting would resolve all our questions. However, we believe that collaboration with state officials is vital for the IHSA to be able to develop an informed plan for the 300,000-plus student-athletes and over 800 high schools that encompass the Association."

IHSA and IESA leadership used the meeting to reintroduce recommended mitigations from the IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), as well as to seek understanding on any preliminary insight IDPH may have related to the return of interscholastic sports. The IHSA also asked IDPH leadership to review the risk levels of all remaining sports, with consideration for lowering some sports from their current risk levels.

"We believe that there is both data and science that validates the idea that we can safely conduct sports," said Anderson. "We have seen it work in other states and believe it can in Illinois if we utilize the mitigations provided by IDPH and the IHSA SMAC. Students are already leaving or participating out-of-state on weekends. We believe that competing for their high school remains the safest venue for participation."

All IHSA sports remain on pause at the moment. Low risk sports may not begin until the state returns to Phase 4 in the All Sports Policy. The IHSA Board of Directors are scheduled to meet again on January 13.

"Our Board of Directors is going to have difficult decisions to make regarding the seasons' for medium- and high-risk sports very soon," said Anderson. "With no specific IDPH timeline or statistical benchmarks established for the return of sports and the calendar shrinking, putting



together a puzzle that allows for all sports to be played becomes increasingly improbable. We continue to urge all residents of our state to be diligent in their efforts to adhere to safety guidelines, as a lower positivity rate remains the key to athletics returning."

What does this mean for Central District 301, the high school will remain on pause as Director Anderson stated above. As the IHSA determines seasons and shares their decision the District will adjust and adhere to those changes and guidelines.

As for our middle school athletics, most of our athletics are governed by the NCJC Conference and the conference has decided not to offer competitions. With the NCJC the conference schools are now starting to offer those sports virtually to their district student athletes. Central District 301 has decided to follow the NCJC and begin to offer sports virtually for the seasons that have passed. Those sports will be communicated through Central & Prairie Knolls Middle Schools announcements and newsletters. As the IESA determines seasons and shares their decision the District will adjust and adhere to those changes and guidelines for the sports we participate in.

As far as an update for our District activities, all activities upon approval will be beginning at Central High School, Central Middle School, and Prairie Knolls Middle School. Our sponsors have been working hard to prepare on how to offer these opportunities to our students. As the activities are ready, those activities will be communicated by sponsors and each school.

Please know these decisions have not been easy to navigate as we know how important athletics and activities are to our community and school culture; however, the decisions have been made with the safety of all students, student-athletes, coaches, and staff at the forefront and will continue to be the main focus on what, when, and how we will provide to our community.

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to the following:

**District Athletics:**

Central High School Athletics Director Steve Diversey @ [steve.diversey@central301.net](mailto:steve.diversey@central301.net)  
Central Middle School Athletic Director Dan Palmiter @ [dan.palmiter@central301.net](mailto:dan.palmiter@central301.net)  
Prairie Knolls Middle School Athletic Director Brody Hamel @ [brody.hamel@central301.net](mailto:brody.hamel@central301.net)

**District Activities:**

Central High School Activities Director Steve Diversey @ [steve.diversey@central301.net](mailto:steve.diversey@central301.net)  
Central Middle School Principal Carie Walter @ [carie.walter@central301.net](mailto:carie.walter@central301.net)  
Prairie Knolls Middle School Principal Matt Haug @ [matthew.haug@central301.net](mailto:matthew.haug@central301.net)

Thank You,  
Steve Diversey  
Athletic & Activities Director