

September 17, 2020

Dear Central Counties League Communities:

As you know, on August 24th, Governor Cuomo announced that low and moderate-risk interscholastic athletics could begin play on September 21st. Since that time, both the New York Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) and Section III have allowed fall sports to continue. In response, the Districts of the CCL have coordinated with one another to determine the best path forward for our student-athletes and our communities.

Collectively, we have reviewed the *NYSPHSAA Return to Athletics* guidance and compared it with the reopening guidance from the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Health. In addition, we have consulted with our local medical professionals, including our respective Departments of Health, and we have received feedback from students, parents, our Boards of Education, and our communities. After careful consideration of all of the information at our disposal, we have made the collective decision to postpone fall interscholastic athletics until March 1, 2021, the “second” fall season offered by Section III.

We understand the importance of athletics for our students and their physical and social-emotional well being. This decision was made with sadness and disappointment for our student-athletes. Ultimately, our most important priority is always to ensure that we provide a safe, healthy, and secure environment for the education of our students. When all factors are considered, we believe that the benefit of a limited fall sports season is outweighed by the risk of potential COVID-19 exposures to our student-athletes, coaches, fans and communities, and ultimately to our school districts' abilities to maintain in-person instruction during the 2020-21 school year.

We understand that the decision to postpone the fall sports season will be heartbreaking for many in our communities, particularly our student-athletes. Please know that this decision is not a decision to cancel fall sports or to end all interscholastic sports for the 2020-2021 school year, but rather to delay fall sports until March in order to provide our student-athletes with the best opportunity to have a safe and meaningful season.

Like you, we look forward to the excitement of seeing our student-athletes compete once again. We thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Respectfully,

Brookfield Central School District  
Cincinnatus Central School District  
DeRuyter Central School District  
Madison Central School District

McGraw Central School District  
Otselic Valley Central School District  
Stockbridge Valley Central School District



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Todd M. Freeman  
Superintendent

September 17, 2020

Dear Cincy athletes, students, parents, and fans,

I made a recommendation to the Board of Education that we delay our fall sports season which includes soccer and cross country to the spring, which is scheduled to begin on March 1. This was one of the most difficult decisions I have made, ever. In high school, I was a three-sport athlete, a college lacrosse player and coached football and lacrosse for the duration of my teaching career. I understand the importance of sports to many of you and I know this decision has ramifications.

I don't have answers to many of the questions you may have. I don't know if we will have access to a playable field in March; in May 2020, I plowed my driveway. I don't know how many students will participate in a non-traditional fall season. I don't know the status of a vaccine or how COVID-19 will still be impacting our lives.

I can only make decisions based on what I know as of September 17. For Cincinnati, we can only schedule games within a 25-mile radius. I know that we only have one league opponent for soccer as members schools in the Central Counties League have opted to move their fall sports to 'Fall Season 2'. Onondaga High School League (OHSL) schools within the 25 miles cannot guarantee they can schedule Cincinnati within their league format. Our neighboring schools in Section IV have already voted to move their soccer seasons to 'Fall 2' and we cannot schedule games with them. Even with outside games, spectators were going to be limited to only two spectators per player, with a total of 150 people, including coaches, players, officials, and spectators from each team.

There are also many contradictions and inconsistencies. In physical education class, it is mandated that students remain 12 feet apart and wear masks. In music class, students must remain 12 feet apart if they are singing and must wear a mask. Our chorale and ensembles must remain 12 feet apart. These are all directives from the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department. But at 3:30 on any given field, soccer players, field hockey players, and runners can get within inches of each other and masks are only required if they are 'tolerable'. I struggle to implement guidance from DOH and NYSED between 7:50 and 3:00 only to condone a fall schedule of athletics that violates these principles.

I am acutely aware that many regional club sports such as soccer, lacrosse and volleyball have been traveling throughout the northeast all summer long without any known transmission of COVID. An athlete that chooses to participate in sports accepts an inherent risk of injury and in this time of COVID, a risk of being infected or transmitting this to others. A student who sits in class next to that athlete does not volunteer that same risk. I take the responsibility of maintaining the safety of all students and all staff very seriously.

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Todd M. Freeman  
Superintendent

The past 8 school days have been fantastic. Our students are back in class, in-person for the first time since March 12. Every staff member has returned to us with a determination to make this school year successful for all students. We remain committed to keeping your child safe, providing great instruction, and maintaining flexibility to do what is required of us as we continue in this temporary condition.

With regards,

*Todd M. Freeman*