



Mayfield City Schools

EVERY STUDENT. EVERY DAY.

August 18, 2020

Dear Mayfield Parents, Guardians, Students and Staff,

A couple of weeks ago the Ohio High School Athletic Association published a statement that unless the COVID testing requirement was lifted there would be no contact sports this fall. Essentially, this statement signaled the OHSAA's desire to move forward with athletics including contact sports.

Since June, I have allowed our contact sports to continue practicing and our golf and tennis teams to compete under the OHSAA health and safety guidelines established by the Department of Health. The band, flags, Cattettes and cheerleaders began practicing this week as well under these same guidelines.

Today, the Governor **through executive order** allowed **all sports** to continue with their seasons.

Our sports teams, band, flags, cheerleading and Cattettes adhere to all safety and health protocols **including daily COVID symptom screenings and temperature checks.**

This evening, I and several other superintendents were in a virtual meeting with Governor Dewine. **I have made the decision to allow all of our fall sports, band, flags, cheerleading and Cattettes to continue practicing, performing and competing per the Governor's order and in accordance with the health and safety guidelines set forth by the Governor and the OHSAA.** My decision to move forward with these activities is based on these factors.

- To date, none of our students participating in fall sports or extracurricular activities have displayed symptoms of COVID or tested positive for COVID since they began in June.
- The Governor and the OHSAA are allowing these activities to continue.
- Participation in these activities provides some normalcy and a sense of well-being for our students.

We will adhere to all safety, health and attendance rules set by the Governor, OHSAA and the Western Reserve Conference. Our Athletic Director will share details concerning the modifications, rules and guidelines with parents and coaches. For those involved, your adherence to the rules and guidelines will help us to have a safe and successful fall seasons. You should also know that there are conditions that must be maintained in order to continue practicing and competing. These details will be communicated to parents, coaches and students soon.

I have been hearing from many that allowing sports does not make sense while we are in full remote learning. I respect these opinions. However, my reasoning is not only grounded in the three bullet points above but also in the following.

- School is compulsory and participating in extracurricular activities is a choice.
- Health experts have said that risk of infection is further mitigated when activities are held out of doors, limited to cohorts of people and those in the community have taken prevention measures seriously.

- We can manage daily screening and temperature taking procedures with teams and extracurricular groups. However, taking temperatures is something the American Academy of Pediatrics cites as impractical for thousands of students getting on a bus or walking through school doors on a daily basis.
- It is encouraging to me, moving forward, that our student athletes have not displayed symptoms nor tested positive for COVID while practicing and competing. This means our students and staff are following the rules in order to lessen the chance of spread and infection.

On another note, we are bringing in select groups of students this week to provide assessments and assist with various transitions. It has been wonderful seeing these students and their families. In addition to helping these students get acclimated, it is an opportunity for us to put our in-person safety and health protocols into practice as we continue to prepare for an eventual return to school should pandemic conditions in our county continue to improve. The preparations and adjustments our staff have made in order to react to any condition are impressive.

Also, I have made a decision to allow our teachers and some instructional support paraprofessionals to work from both school and home to ensure that the internal and external technology networks can handle the traffic. Our staff has worked very hard to upgrade the remote learning experience as compared to last spring. Even though our technology networks are robust, I don't want to compromise the instruction because of too much internal and external traffic on the networks. Each teacher will work on a school and home rotating schedule. The daily instructional schedules and expectations for staff and students are not affected by this change. Administrators, counselors, social workers, secretaries, custodians, drivers, mechanics and food services workers will be on campus full time. All staff will be on campus full time when it is we return to in-person learning with a remote option.

Finally, you have heard this many times. Our circumstances regarding schools and athletics reopening are extraordinary and there is no exact playbook on how to go about it. The mixed messaging from national, state, local leadership and health experts is frustrating at best. Political and other biases only add to the lack of trust and understanding.

However, I have complete confidence in the plan we have designed given what is known and not known about this virus. So far, our transition week has been successful and our staff is already going above and beyond to connect with their students. The instructional methods being used in this remote learning environment are greatly improved and we are thankful to have many digital tools to engage students. Our safety plans are thorough and staff is trained to keep our facilities and buses as clean as possible. We are well prepared to teach remotely and able to pivot to in-person learning within one week.

I have heard and seen the opinions and severe criticisms on all sides of this issue. My focus is on the well-being, health and safety of our students and how it is we can deliver the best instruction possible. I will continue to examine the evolution of the science and recommendations from the health and medical experts as I make my decisions.

Like you, I very much look forward to the day when the kids come back to school.

Sincerely,

Keith Kelly