



MEMORANDUM

TO: BCSS MEMBER SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND ATHLETIC DIRECTORS
FROM: JORDAN ABNEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: COVID-19 UPDATE FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL
DATE: AUGUST 13, 2020
CC: DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS, BCSS SPORT COMMISSIONERS, LOCAL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS, ZONE PRESIDENTS, PARTNER STAKEHOLDERS

COVID-19 Update

Following the K-12 Education Restart Plan announcement on July 29, the BCSS Board of Directors met to discuss the options for the 2020-2021 school year. The Board decided that **effective the first-day students are in session (tentatively September 10th), the ban on school sport activities currently in place will be lifted and provided that they can be conducted following guidelines as published in the K-12 Education Restart Plan, school sport activities may resume.**

The announcement clarified that co-curricular activities such as our traditional interschool athletics are **not permitted at this time**. This announcement has brought a great deal of disappointment to students, coaches and parents, as we know what an integral role school sports play in a student's high school experience. The Restart Plan addresses specifically school sport activities and states:

Extracurricular activities in middle and secondary schools including sports, arts (including band and choir) or special interest clubs can occur if:

- physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups (cohorts)
- reduced physical contact can be practiced by those within the same learning group (cohort)

The Education Restart Plan also notes that activities like inter-school competition will be re-evaluated in the mid-fall. To that end, we are making every effort to present a case to the government to allow a modified school sport to return safely and responsibly based on the Return to School Sport work that has been prepared this summer. We have also received a lot of questions from parents and AD's about the discrepancy between school sports and those happening already in the community. We understand the frustration and are communicating those to the government.



Now that there is clarity on what the school year will look like, we are working on finalizing the Return to School Sport plan to provide guidelines and resources for our schools. It will be incumbent on our administrators, athletic directors and coaches to find creative solutions to safely engage students in school sport activities at this time. We expect the Return to School Sport Plan to be published before the beginning of school.

The ban on school sport activities will remain in place until students are back in session. However, coaches are still permitted to conduct virtual sessions to stay engaged with student-athletes throughout the last few weeks of summer.

Operations Update

In a normal year, BCSS would begin the mail-out and opt-in process for our member schools in August to prepare for the start of the school year and the fall season of play. In response to the dynamic and constantly changing environment for school sport, there will be some changes to the normal procedures.

Unchanged is the requirement for each school administrator of record to confirm their school's BCSS membership for the school year. During the week of August 24, the administrator of record will receive an email to complete their school's membership opt-in. In addition to confirming their membership for the year, they will be asked to update the key contact information for their school. Until the school administrator completed the approximately 3-minute opt-in process their Athletic Director will not have access to STARS.

Given the uncertainty around school sport this year due to COVID-19, the BCSS Board of Directors has opted to charge only 60% of the annual membership fees at this time. The Board felt it was critical to ensure BCSS remained functional to assist and guide member schools through this period while remaining ready for the eventual return to normalized activities. The Board is also cognizant of the tight fiscal environment member schools face this year as well as the likely decrease in interschool sporting opportunities. They will evaluate the need throughout the year if all, some or none of the remaining 40% should be assessed to the Member Schools. BCSS does not pro-rate membership fees regardless of when a school joins throughout the year. It is the hope of the Board that our member schools value the work of BCSS and will complete the opt-in immediately.



Please keep an eye on your email in the coming weeks as we will be replacing our usual mail-out with a virtual Welcome Back Package. This will include our Return to Sport Plan, links to important documents, clarification on Eligibility and Transfers during this time, our 2020-2021 Handbook & Calendar, as well as the 2019-2020 Annual Report.

We understand the frustration that comes with the uncertainty ahead. However, we know that our students will be returning to our schools in a few weeks, and that's an important first step. We ask for your continued patience and thank you for your support as we continue to advocate for the importance of school sport during these times.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Abney", is positioned below the word "Respectfully,".

Jordan Abney
Executive Director