

BOARD OF EDUCATION

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF LITTLE FALLS

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

15 PETRIE STREET

LITTLE FALLS, NEW YORK 13365

BOARD OF EDUCATION

KRISTINA M. HAMEISTER, PRESIDENT
CHRISTINE D. SHEPARDSON, VICE PRESIDENT
TRACY COULSON
WILLIAM DODGE
JOSEPH FINKST, JR.
BERNARD E. JODWAY JR.
FRANK MENDEL

KEITH T. LEVATINO, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools
315-823-1470

BARTHOLOMEW TOOLEY
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
315-823-1167

ASHRAF ALLAM
Director of Technology/Business Operations
315-823-1470
FAX NO: 315-823-0321

January 28, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Herkimer County schools and public health officials have developed a framework for how higher-risk sports such as basketball, volleyball, wrestling and competitive cheerleading could take place if local COVID-19 positivity rates decrease for an extended period of time.

On Friday, Jan. 22, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that schools may be allowed to offer high-risk sports starting on Feb. 1 under certain specific conditions only as permitted by local health authorities such as county health departments. Health authorities are required to consider health and safety factors such as COVID-19 positivity rates.

Herkimer County school superintendents and the Herkimer County Department of Public Health established the following guidelines:

- Districts could decide to schedule higher-risk sports seasons if Herkimer County's positivity rate drops below 3 percent and remains below 3 percent over a 14-day rolling average for 14 days.
- If the sports season does begin, but the rate goes above 3.5 percent on a 14-day rolling average, sports would be paused.

As of the time of this writing, Herkimer County's 14-day rolling average was 8.6 percent, more than double the 3.5 percent threshold.

This framework, based on the thresholds the state established for the Yellow Zone Micro-Cluster, is aimed at ensuring districts can maintain the safe environment that has been developed within schools. School officials hope that positivity rates decrease and higher-risk sports can take place safely, but there are significant considerations when allowing students to gather and mingle for athletic contests that include close contact.

School officials in the region would like to thank their school communities for their patience and understanding during this process of monitoring and assessing the safety considerations involved with school sports.

Schools involved with this plan are the Town of Webb and the 10 Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES component districts: Central Valley, Dolgeville, Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Little Falls, Mount Markham, Owen D. Young, Poland, Richfield Springs and West Canada Valley.

The list of higher-risk sports includes football, wrestling, ice hockey, rugby, basketball, contact lacrosse, volleyball, martial arts, competitive cheer and group dance. Districts will make determinations about these sports seasons if the positivity rate reaches a point where these sports seasons could commence.

The governor's announcement does not affect spring sports such as baseball, softball, tennis, and track and field. It also does not change any ongoing low- or moderate-risk sports seasons, such as bowling.

Athletic directors are meeting to develop "Sports Reopening Plans" that will be reviewed by the Herkimer County Department of Public Health. Districts in Herkimer County will continue to monitor the positivity rate in the county, and remain hopeful that rates will continue to go down in such a way as to allow the maximum number of sports seasons to be scheduled.

More information about the winter and spring sports seasons can be found by downloading the New York State Public High School Athletics Association's resource document using this link:
<http://nysphsaa.org/Portals/0/COVID%2019/2021%20January%20-%20Return%20To%20Interscholastic%20Athletics.pdf>

Sincerely,



Keith T. Levatino, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools
Little Falls City School District