



MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



MIAA Opening Comments President Jeffrey Granatino MIAA Board of Directors Meeting July 21, 2020

Good afternoon and welcome everyone to the MIAA Board of Directors Meeting. As this is the first full meeting of the 2020-21 school year, I would typically take this time to discuss the progress we are making in addressing goals we set this time last summer. But in deference to the pressing matters before us, I will pull back a bit and look to table my full president's message until our scheduled meeting in August.

However, at this time, I do want to note that, as educators, this Board fully understands that opening schools in a safe fashion for all of our students and staff is the most important thing for school leaders to be working on at this time. Every district is focused on what type of academic programming they can offer their students, whether it's in-person, remote or a hybrid model. And while schools work on creating their three potential academic options, we, as an Association, are tasked with assessing the ability for sports to take place this fall, within these three possible scenarios. We do this with an understanding that our students desperately want to see a return to school athletics and that sports, along with extracurricular activities such as music, performing arts and other clubs and activities, all have a huge impact on the health and social emotional well being of our students.

While we will hear from the Covid 19 Task Force and our fellow board members in a bit, we will ultimately have to wait for the publication of state guidelines on athletics from DESE, the Dept. of Public Health and the Governor's Executive office of Energy & Environmental Affairs to determine whether we will be able to offer a full slate of fall athletics. I am confident that whatever actions are taken today, or in the near future, will be made with the best interest of our students and their coaches in mind.

As you all are aware, since March 12, the focus of this association, along with school districts across the state, has been on the health and well-being of our students and staff during an unprecedented, worldwide pandemic. While we spent the spring waiting to see if school would resume, the Association also had to consider plans that would allow for athletics to take place safely, if and when school was reopened. As we all know, schools were eventually closed for the year, after multiple extensions, and thus, regardless of the countless hours put in by the Board, the TMC and other sport and health-related committees, we were unable to have interscholastic athletics.

Now, in July, the Commonwealth, along with states across the nation, is still grappling with how to open schools in a safe fashion for our students and staff this fall, and again, we are awaiting for word from others on whether we will be able to hold interscholastic athletics when schools reopen.

To help prepare for the possibility that fall interscholastic athletics would take place, we convened a Covid 19 Task Force earlier in the spring that was asked to find out how sports could take place in our Corona-virus impacted school environments. We have understood that there is no guarantee that sports will be allowed to take place but, as in the spring, it's been incumbent upon the Association to have plans in place if we are

eventually told that we can move forward with fall sports. To not have plans ready to go, that would ensure the safe participation of our student/athletes and their coaches, would be irresponsible on our part. The work that this Covid 19 Task Force has done, along with the expertise added by our Sports Medicine Committee, is greatly appreciated and will help guide this body as we look at what options may be available to us in the fall. We will be hearing shortly from the Task Force chairs as they present an overview of their work and a handful of initial recommendations for the Board to weigh in on.

Regardless of what we end up with this fall, the Association continues to stand ready to meet the needs of our stakeholders, from Pittsfield to Eastham and to build on the progress that has been made over the past twelve months. I am honored to continue to serve as your president and I want to thank every board member for their time and efforts on behalf of our student athletes across the state. I want to also thank our stakeholders from all regions of the Commonwealth, who represent their schools, their teams and their students so admirably. I ask that our state's AD's, Principals and Superintendents remember that they are the MIAA and we are here ready to work with them to continually improve as an organization and to safely meet the needs of our student-athletes. We understand we have a lot of work to do and fortunately, we have a dedicated group of educational leaders ready to take on the challenge.

Thank you.

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