

AUG. 19, 2020

SUSPENSION OF INTRAMURALS AND HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Sherwood Park, AB. — “Over the past week, the EIPS Board of Directors and senior leaders heard from many parents and students regarding the Division’s decision to suspend intramural and high school athletics for the fall.

“Understandably, many school families are disappointed at this outcome. Sports play an important role in the health and wellbeing of students, and greatly enhance the educational experience for those in elementary, junior and senior high. For some high school students, competitive athletics can be a springboard for elite, post-secondary and professional-level sports opportunities as well.

“On August 13, the Alberta Schools’ Athletic Association (ASAA) [announced](#) the postponement of all ASAA fall provincial championships until the Government of Alberta moves to Stage 3 and outlines the implications for inter-regional sports competition. This means scrimmages and competition between schools is not permitted at this time.

“While there is flexibility in terms of holding practices and running intramurals, we do not feel we can do so in a way that respects current physical distancing and masking requirements. Athletes are often physically close to teammates, both on the playing surface and in change rooms. As well, the very nature of many sports results in athletes breathing heavily with no chance to keep physically distant from one another, their opponents and team staff—potentially spreading COVID-19 through respiratory droplets.

“The point has been made that some students choose to take part in club sports outside of school. It must also be said that these same students may potentially be exposed to COVID-19 while participating as part of these sports cohorts in the community.

“That potential exposure outside of school makes it all the more important that when students are in our buildings, we ensure they maintain physical distance from one another, use a mask when physical distancing isn’t possible, minimize contact with multiple cohorts and practice proper hand hygiene. Running intramurals and practices at this point in time would make it extremely difficult to adhere to these preventative measures.

“Our priority for the start of the 2020-21 school year is to ensure we have a smooth start up and focus on the educational needs of students. We will re-evaluate our decision regarding intramurals and high school sports as the school year progresses.” – *Mark Liguori, Superintendent, Elk Island Public Schools*

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