Lynda G. Adams, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

September 11, 2020

Dear Mr. Combs and the Section XI Athletic Council,

To say that I am deeply disappointed in your decision to delay the start of interscholastic athletics until January 2021 for Suffolk County students, is truly an understatement. We live and work in an area with some of the strictest guidelines to protect the health and safety of our communities, our community infection rate is amongst the lowest in the nation and our local youth athletics have been successfully competing all summer. Governor Cuomo, who has erred on the side of caution throughout the entire pandemic, has permitted schools to return to play. Our school district fields will be open for youngsters from ages 3 and up for community-based athletics, but our own modified, junior varsity and varsity athletes are sidelined.

I recognize the challenges inherent in interscholastic play. When Governor Cuomo’s announcement of reintroduction of interscholastic athletics being permitted as of September 21st came out, my Athletic Director immediately began preparations to return to play. We discussed many issues – including transportation, increased contact between and among athletes of differing communities, staggered practices, hybrid and virtual students being included on teams, etc., and while we would have welcomed a week or two more to ensure all protective measures were in place, the thought of NOT allowing athletics in our schools, never occurred to us.

You will say, but we will have athletics, just later in the year. How do we keep those hundreds of students, from our schools alone, off the streets, and in shape for these seasons? How do we ask our student to choose from two teams that are now overlapping? Are the seasons really ending on your end-by dates or will each season be extended by playoffs and championships, thereby having all seasons overlap? How do our coaches, who may coach multiple seasons, coach when their seasons will overlap?

Outdoor, low and moderate risk athletics, beginning in the fall, would have allowed us a dry run for when we need to move indoors. Indoor athletics and practices – at the “safe” distance of 12 feet for each athlete, will absolutely decrease the number of athletes that can be carried by a team and safely practice inside, thereby necessitating a decreased practice time for all teams, thereby leading to injury. Now we are forced to do that in January – when the ONLY practices we can have will be indoors.

Please reconsider your decision. There needs to be a compromise that allows our students to safely play sooner.

Sincerely,

Lynda G. Adams, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Proud Connetquot T-Bird