



Canton

Union School District #66

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Parents, Friends, and Guardians:

At the outset, the number one priority of the Canton Union School District has been, and will continue to be, providing a safe and healthy environment for the students, staff, and families of Canton. That priority will never change. In fact, the district has increased our policies and operations to enhance and elevate that priority since the advent of the COVID19 pandemic last spring.

As I write this correspondence the Illinois Department of Health County Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics has reported a 7 day rolling average for positivity increases for Region 2 at 4.8%. Equally important, IDPH has also reported an average daily increase of the infection rate of COVID for the past 8 days of .125% per day. In response, state officials have indicated once the positivity rate reaches 8% new measures will be implemented to control the spread of the COVID 19 virus. From 7/19 thru 7/25 Fulton County saw an increase of 6 new cases. Although still low the statistics indicate that this insidious virus is still not under control. In fact, if the current rate continues uncontrolled the region could find itself reaching the 8% benchmark within 30 days.

On July 23, 2020 the Illinois Elementary School Association announced they were cancelling all fall youth school sports. The IESA cited the difficulty of implementing preventative COVID-related mandates released by the Illinois Department of Public Health as a reason for cancelling all fall youth sports. In contrast, just 7 days later the IESA reversed their decision after the state released a guidance document titled All Sports Policy: Restore Illinois. The document categorized all youth and adult sports into 3 categories: Higher Risk, Medium Risk, and Lower Risk. However, what has changed?

To be perfectly honest nothing has changed in regard to the spread of the COVID 19 virus. In fact, in spite of the All Sports Policy guidance by the state the infection rate has continued to increase in Region 2 and in Fulton County. The increase in the infection rate has been

attributed to people not following the very mandates the IESA used as a reason for cancelling fall sports. For example, the IDPH has publicly stated the lack of masks, large gatherings without masks, and travel to areas of “hotspots” as reasons contributing to the increase of the infection rate of COVID 19. Fulton County and Canton are certainly not exempt from that reasoning. As some citizens in Region 2 and Fulton County ignore the health warnings issued by state officials, more people are placed at risk – including the youth of Canton. Until the COVID virus is under control the Canton Union School District will find it very difficult to safely conduct youth sports programs. As a result, the district will continue to suspend training and competitive activity until all health statistics indicate the spread of the COVID virus is under control. The statistics will be reviewed in September to determine if the district may reinstitute the youth sports program in a safe manner.

Sincerely
Rolf Sivertsen
Superintendent
Canton Schools