

September 16, 2020

Thank you all for joining us tonight, whether it be in person or by tuning in virtually. Before we proceed with tonight's meeting agenda, I wanted to take a few minutes, on behalf of my colleagues on the Board, to thank everyone in our district for ensuring a smooth start to the 2020-21 school year. I know there was a tremendous amount of planning and preparation that went into reopening our schools, and we, as parents and community residents, greatly appreciate everyone's collective efforts.

I would also be remiss if I did not address Section XI's decision on Friday to delay the start of sports until January. This announcement was, in short, utterly disappointing and pivoted from our district's standpoint that sports could begin safely and in accordance with new health measures this fall. In fact, our administrators had already begun to develop such plans and were working to ensure our program was ready to commence this September. Section XI's decision is one that we believe was rendered without giving adequate consideration to the input provided by Suffolk County athletic directors and school districts.

We realize that the delay in sports adds yet another stressor to the lives of student-athletes and withholds many opportunities from them. Please be assured that, as always, our district will continue to support and advocate for our student-athletes, coaches and athletic program. We stand beside you and will do everything we can to expedite your return to the sports you love in a manner that is safe, secure and best for all involved.

As a district, we also understand and value efforts to proactively advocate for our student athletes through many different outlets and we respect these individual and collective efforts. However, it is important that we do not encourage large gatherings of students and families that have the potential to violate physical distancing guidelines and place our students and families at risk. You have our commitment that we will strongly advocate for a reversal in decision by Section XI and together with administration will be issuing a letter in support of athletics.