

The Western Illinois Valley Conference (WIVC) superintendents came to the consensus to delay the start of the basketball seasons. The decision was based on the conflict in guidance from the Illinois High School Association and the Illinois Department of Public and Health and the Governor's Office. In addition, our local, regional, and state communities continue to cope with a surge in COVID cases that are having an impact on public schools, staff, and students.

The Illinois Department of Public Health moved basketball to a high-risk sport which requires us to avoid physical contact, wear masks indoors, and not have groups over certain numbers. If school districts do not follow these guidelines, we risk our tort immunities, which puts the school district at great risk. We feel we did not have an option at this time.

There was a unanimous decision of our WIVC member districts to delay the start of this year's boys' and girls' basketball season. As school leaders, we support all of the educational opportunities, including athletics and extracurricular activities, that our schools provide. We will continue to support our student athletes and understand the value provided by high school sports and activities. Once the Illinois Department of Public Health provides school guidance for our student athletes to safely play basketball, we will fully support that endeavor.

We support the IHSA for its stance on the athletic seasons as they feel they developed a plan to safely manage high school sports and the IDPH for its stance to reduce the spread of the disease. We believe these agencies, along with other state leaders - including the Governor's Office - should immediately convene to develop a plan and provide school districts across the state with unified guidance.