



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS of
BROOKLYN and QUEENS
FOUNDATION for LIFE

March 11, 2021

Hon. Dr. Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc Commissioner
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
125 Worth Street
New York, New York 10013

Re: Catholic High School Association (Diocese of Brooklyn & Archdiocese of New York)

Dear Hon. Dr. Chokshi,

As the Superintendents for Schools for the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York, we write to you today to thank you for your efforts in developing guidance as it pertains to our Catholic schools.

The Catholic high schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York have been open and operating safely for some time now. Both the schools and the Catholic High School Athletic Associations (CHSAA) are committed to safe practices in higher-risk sports to ensure the safety of the student-athletes, their families, and other persons with whom they may come in contact.

The fact that high schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York have continued to safely remain open for in-person learning has enabled CHSAA student-athletes to undergo conditioning and training within the approved guidelines. They are now ready to commence competitive play. To be clear, we are not requesting a special variance from safe practices and guidelines. CHSAA student-athletes should not be prevented from competitive play because other school systems have been unable to open or condition their student-athletes. To do so would unfairly penalize these children and, in essence, punish them for following all guidelines to date.

In the counties neighboring New York City, the local authorities have issued guidelines already, and play has resumed. We have been told that your office has guidelines forthcoming; however, our requests for new guidelines and a definite answer as to when competitive play may recommence are of the utmost importance. As your office thoughtfully develops these guidelines, it is our hope that the needs of the Catholic schools will be included. In addition, the Presidents for CHSAA in both the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Archdiocese of New York, Mr. Dominick Vulpis and Mr. Kevin Pigott, are available to contribute to this important work.

When setting guidelines, the Association should not be grouped with the PSAL. Since many public schools have not opened, it has prevented its student-athletes from undergoing the necessary conditioning and strength training that CHSAA student-athletes have already completed. To mandate that the CHSAA conform to standards and timeframes issued by the

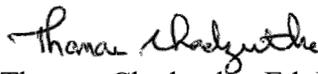
Department of Education for PSAL teams is both without rational basis and discriminatory against Catholic school students. Moreover, the students' mental health and social-emotional well-being rely on these activities, which overall research has shown to increase mental health outcomes. It has also been reported to us that coaches in the PSAL expect competitive play to resume on April 1, 2021, for Higher-Risk Sports, Catholic Schools would advocate for as soon as safely allowed. As it has been announced that PSAL teams will resume play on April 1, 2021, these guidelines must be delivered expeditiously and not last minute. We are scheduled to commence competitive play shortly; therefore, time is of the utmost importance.

We thank you for your anticipated attention and timely response to this matter.

Regards,



Mr. Michael J. Deegan
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of New York



Thomas Chadzutko, Ed. D.
Superintendent – Catholic Schools Support Services
R.C. Diocese of Brooklyn

Cc: The Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City