

Dear Student-Athletes and Parents/Guardians:

Throughout the fall, we have all eagerly awaited decisions from the Virginia High School League (VHSL) and state government regarding the status of high school athletics. We believe that athletics provide a wide range of benefits to students, and we all very much would like for circumstances in our region to support the playing of high school sports. Even though some hurdles have been cleared by the VHSL and the governor allowing play, each region and locality must still work with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to make decisions based on current public health data related to COVID-19.

You may have seen in the media that several school districts across Virginia and several private schools in our area have decided to cancel athletics. You may have also read that the VDH, the health department serving our region (Roanoke-Alleghany Health District), has recommended that high school athletic competitions not proceed unless public health metrics decrease to the moderate level or lower for our region. In response to these recommendations and, given that we are experiencing a spike in COVID-19 cases, **school districts in the Roanoke-Alleghany Health District have developed clear criteria that schools in our districts will use to determine if competitions will occur from week to week.** We have adopted this approach to hold out hope that some games can be played, rather than cancelling the entire season.

For your convenience, the criteria that will be used by school districts in the Roanoke-Alleghany Health District to decide if games and competitions will be held each week are described below. The criteria are based on two key metrics (VDH Weekly Transmission Extent and CDC School Metrics dashboard), and on consultation with the Roanoke-Alleghany Health District.

If the play is allowed, all VHSL guidelines will be followed as well as all Governor's Executive Orders regarding the number of spectators allowed at events. If you have any questions, please contact the athletic director or principal at your school.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we all work together to stem the COVID-19 infection rates in our region.

Sincerely,

Sherman Callahan
Acting Superintendent
Alleghany County Public Schools

Verletta White
Superintendent
Roanoke City Public Schools

Dr. Jonathan Russ
Superintendent
Botetourt County Public Schools

Dr. Ken Nicely
Superintendent
Roanoke County Public Schools

Melinda Snead-Johnson
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Covington City Public Schools

Dr. Alan Seibert
Superintendent
Salem City Public Schools

Jeanette Warwick
Superintendent
Craig County Public Schools

Roanoke-Alleghany Health District Return to Play Criteria

Coaches and sponsors will follow phase II guidance for extracurricular activities when the region is experiencing high burden or transmission levels based on the [7-day regional metric](#), or the locality is experiencing high or highest values on any core measure using the [CDC School Metrics Dashboard](#). Coaches/sponsors will use phase III guidance for extracurricular activities when the region is experiencing moderate, low, or minimal burden and transmission levels ([7-day metric](#)) and the locality is experiencing moderate, low, or lowest risk ([CDC School Metric](#)).

The following guidelines will be used to make decisions about scheduled activities.

1. Using the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Pandemic Metrics dashboard, [Weekly Transmission Extent \(7 day metric\)](#) the region of the localities for the participating schools and the locality of the event must be at a moderate, low, or minimal burden and transmission levels to participate. If the data is trending upward, it will be monitored daily to ensure that the region continues to experience moderate, low, or minimal burden and transmission levels on the date of the competition. (Exception- If the region is experiencing high burden and or high transmission, but guidance from the local health department indicates that there are extenuating circumstances in the region that minimizes the impact on the activity, the activity can continue as scheduled.)
2. If the region is experiencing moderate, low, or minimal burden and transmission levels, conditions for the participating localities and the location of the event will also be examined using the [CDC School Metrics dashboard \(14 day metric\)](#) to ensure that the localities are at the moderate risk level (yellow) or lower for both core indicators. If any core indicator for the locality of any participating team or the location of the activity indicates high or highest risk, the activity will be postponed or canceled unless the local health department verifies that there are extenuating circumstances in the locality experiencing high or highest risk that minimizes the impact on the activity.

- If the local health department verifies that there are extenuating circumstances in the locality experiencing high or highest risk that minimizes the impact on the activity, the activity can proceed.
 - If it is determined that the activity can proceed the schools involved should also consider reducing the number of students and staff who travel and/or participate to essential personnel.
3. If the core indicators for the locality of any participating team or the location of the activity indicate moderate risk (YELLOW), low risk (GREEN) or lowest risk (DARK GREEN) the activity can proceed based on VHSL guidelines for return to participation.
 4. Any participating school experiencing an outbreak will communicate directly with their local health district contact person and a representative from participating schools to make a decision about scheduled activities.