

**Aaron J. J. Engel, Ph. D.**  
Superintendent of Schools  
807 East Avenue South  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608.789.7628 Fax: 608.789.7604



Kelly Galván, Executive Assistant  
kgalvan@lacrossesd.org

Laura Steigerwald, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary  
lsteiger@lacrossesd.org

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you are likely aware, we have made the difficult decision to move fall sports to the alternate fall season made available by the WIAA. This decision was made with a number of considerations in mind.

The primary reason for this decision is that holding athletics practices, travelling to athletic competitions, and bringing together spectators for athletic events will contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in our community and jeopardize holding in-person school.

Our first priority as a public school district is to safely provide the best possible education for our students. We know that holding in-person school is best for most students. To reach this goal, we are not going to intentionally do anything that jeopardizes the possibility of in-person learning.

Athletics are a valuable part of many of our students' lives. We greatly value the character, leadership, community and skill development opportunities playing sports provides. We know that athletics play a role in some of our students' identities and sense of belonging and that the loss of athletics this spring has affected our students' mental health. However, these concerns are outweighed by our responsibility to provide the best possible education we can for all of our students.

Other factors we considered in making this decision include: health and safety of students and staff, equity between different sports, likelihood of competition for certain sports, likelihood of positive exposures to COVID-19 and subsequent shutdowns of sports, the loss of a full season later if a fall sport ends mid-season, logistics of practices and competitions, sanitation procedures, availability of cleaning resources, the ability of teacher-coaches to support students in the classroom virtually while coaching, and the contradiction of allowing athletics but not holding in-person school.

We know that this decision is upsetting to some. We are providing opportunities for virtual connections with coaches this fall to support students' mental health, sense of community, identity, and skill development. We will continue to adapt to the conditions in the community and adjust our course as we learn more. We look forward to putting together the best alternate fall season we can and seeing our students compete in the spring.

Sincerely,

Aaron J. J. Engel, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
School District of La Crosse