

March 16, 2020

School Closures Suspend Iowa High School Spring Activities

Following Sunday's announcements from Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, all spring activities of Iowa's high school Unified Activities partners – the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, the Iowa High School Athletic Association, the Iowa High School Music Association, and the Iowa High School Speech Association – will be prohibited through the state's K-12 school recommended closure of four weeks.

Gov. Reynolds announced the recommended closure in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health, in response to community spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Iowa.

This recommended closure date currently extends through Friday, April 10 and would mean a school return of April 13. Prior to April 10, the schedule will be assessed as necessary with information from the Governor, Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Education, and activity partners at the IGHSAU, IHSAA, IHSMA, and IHSSA.

"Based on new information today from the Iowa Department of Public Health, now is the time to move to the next level of response," Gov. Reynolds said in Sunday's release. "I am now recommending that all Iowa schools close for a period of four weeks to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19."

Per CDC guidelines recommending the cancellation of gatherings of more than 50 individuals for at least eight weeks, events following the planned four-week school closure in Iowa will be updated as the situation develops.

ACTIVITIES

The first practice date for three IHSAA (boys) spring sports was set for Monday, March 16: golf, soccer, and tennis. Baseball was scheduled to begin limited practice time on April 1.

The first practice dates for IGHSAU (girls) tennis and golf was set for Monday, March 16. The first practice dates for girls' soccer was set for March 23.

The first practice date for boys' baseball and girls' softball, May 4, remains the same until further information is provided.

The first practice and competition date for boys/girls track and field was Feb. 17.

All IHSAA and IGHSAU sports are now in a prohibited period for practice, competition, and sanctioned activity until the closure is lifted. This prohibition means no in-person contact between coaches/administrators and student-athletes for the duration of the period.

Guidance on future IGHSAU and IHSAA activity schedule adjustments and their effects on season lengths, as well as postseason events, will be announced through www.iahhsaa.org and www.ighsau.org.

IHSMA has cancelled Class 4A and 1A Solo/Small Ensemble Festival set for April 18, and the state Large Group Festival series set for May 8-9.

There should be no in-person contact between teachers/administrators and participants for the duration of the prohibited period. Any effort to provide IHSMA participants with a make-up experience should take place only via digital media through the duration of the prohibited period.

Future updates and guidance on IHSMA events will be available through www.ihsma.org.

All IHSSA (speech) events will be prohibited to practice or make up their individual state local contest until the closure is lifted. All contact between coaches, judges, and students for the duration of the period is prohibited. The All-State Festival scheduled for March 30 has been cancelled.

Guidance on future IHSSA activity will be announced through www.ihssa.org

SERVICES

The IHSAA is cancelling mass gatherings planned for April, including the Governor's Scholar Ceremony and the annual Officials' Banquet. Students and officials will still be honored with updates to be provided for award recipients.

Officials' clinics for both boys and girls spring and summer activities that were previously scheduled for dates during the recommended closure will be postponed and made up when possible.

The IHSAA concluded its 2019-20 winter sports seasons with Friday's state basketball tournament finals at Wells Fargo Arena, with attendance restrictions in place. Before Saturday's announcements, no recommendations had been made by state or county government regarding mass gatherings or school-related events.

Other in-person meetings scheduled by the IHSAA/IGHSAU or at IHSAA/IGHSAU offices during the closure will be rescheduled or updated.

IHSAA administrators will remain available during this time: www.iahsaa.org/about/staff

IGHSAU administrators will remain available during this time: www.ighsau.org/about/staff

As this situation is rapidly changing, any of the above guidelines may need to be adjusted. Notifications will go out immediately to member schools should updates be necessary.

The Unified Activities partners request member school recipients of this message ensure that involved administrators and educators -- superintendents, principals, activity administrators, coaches, and teachers -- are aware of the items in this communication.