

# MEETING REPORT

## Meeting: NYSPHSAA COVID-19 TASK FORCE

Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 Video Conference Call

### Topics Discussed:

Introduction of Task Force, Roles & Responsibilities, Goal of Task Force, Updates from Governor's Office, NYS Ed Dept, NYS Dept of Health, Guidance Documents, FAQ from NYSPHSAA, Options/Scenarios, Challenges to Overcome, Review of Fundamental Questions and Key Priorities for Task Force, Review of COVID-19 Survey Results, Summer Conditioning Guidance, Addressing Proposals, Media Inquiries & Social Media, Next Steps, Next Meeting.

### Attendees:

Paul Harrica (Chair)	Dr. Robert Zayas
Julie Bergman	Joe Altieri
Russell Bartlett	Todd Nelson
Tim Mullins	Kristen Jadin
Steve Broadwell	Chris Joyce
Jim Osborne	Chris Watson
Tom Combs	Carl Normandin
Matt Walentuck	Kathy Hoyt
Jim Mackin	Paul Gasparini
Chris Ceruti	Scott Barker
Dr. Jim Wright	Rick Knizek
Chris Durdon	Dennis Burkett
Karen Hollowood	Ann Lanoue
Barbara Wallace	Adam Stoltman
Renee James	Jim Dexter
Dr. Ivan Katz	Terrance Pratt
Jill Dunkel	Dr. Marilyn Kacica

NYSPHSAA President and Task Force Chair Paul Harrica called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

### 1. Introduction of Task Force

Paul introduced members of the committee, consultants and references. Paul mentioned Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director, has been selected to serve on the Board of Regents Reopening of School Task Force.

### 2. Roles & Responsibilities of Task Force

Dr. Robert Zayas discussed the role of the committee and emphasized that nothing will come out of this meeting today pertaining to the status of fall sports despite rumors circulating on social media. He stated the role is to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on high school athletics. He also stated Paul appointed this Task Force so members can provide a perspective from their area of the state and also be a representative of each position on the committee.

### 3. Goal of Task Force

Paul indicated before the meeting he recommended each section form a committee for local discussions. The focus of this committee is to make recommendations to NYSPHSAA and Sections across the state if and when directives and guidelines are released from the Governor's Office, NYSED or NYSDOH.

### 4. Update from Governor's Office – Terrance Pratt

Robert introduced Terrance Pratt, Counsel for Education in the Governor's Office. He referenced New York City's opening and the status of many regions across the state. He stated as we look to open schools in Phase 4 the Governor has stated that we will provide guidelines on opening; schools are within Phase 4, and until Phase 4 is reached, schools remain closed. Guidelines are expected in June with the caveat of good data from science, the NYSDOH, and CDC. He referenced examples of detail like Vermont when it comes to the complexity of re-opening school sports. In the last few days, some school activities have opened including graduations for 150 people, special education and day camps which had specific guidance on the DOH website. This level of detail will continue as we continue to open our state especially when it comes to requirements for cleaning and social distancing. He recognized the importance of athletics in schools and the challenges it brings. Robert asked if schools can open their facilities for students prior to Phase 4. Terrance stated that no activities are authorized to reopen until they are authorized. Adam Stoltman asked to clarify the guidelines for schools that are coming in July from the Board of Regents. Terrance could not speak on behalf of the Board of Regents. Terrance emphasized the information he provided was at this moment but could change at any time. He asked everyone to be vigilant and aware of new

information, and continue to work collaboratively with the Governor's office. Robert indicated he was communicating with Rebecca Wood and Dan Fuller from the Governor's office but will add Terrance to communication with them. Jim Osborne asked if schools will open region by region this fall. Terrance stated that the timeline for reopening is not clear at this stage and will depend on the data. Schools are in regions that are on different timelines and hopefully will come in line eventually. Jim asked if some may open in September and some in October. Terrance stated education is in Phase 4 and he could not confirm when each region or specific school will open and that will depend on ongoing monitoring of public health data. Dr. Ivan Katz asked what happens if there's an uptick of infections, what is the plan to reverse phases. Terrance directed that question to DOH.

#### **5. Update from NYS Education Department- Karen Hollowood**

Paul introduced Karen Hollowood and Anne Lanoue from the NYSED, who provided an update. NYSED prepared guidance to schools on a multitude of topics including monitoring illness for students and staff, contingency for sick students, emergency preparedness plans, operations plans, non pharmaceutical plans, hygiene, cleaning/disinfecting, what to do in case of an infection, and establishing a relationship with your local health department. Other information provided to schools included discrimination, school meals, mental health, FAQ, checklist, handwashing/sanitizing, and cleaning/disinfecting. Also, a memo for student's health exams for athletic participation in the fall was distributed. This memo stated if a student had a physical in 2018-19 or 2019-20 school year with a health history update they are eligible. It was also reported the APP was not waived nor revised.

NYSED and the Board of Regents have also formed four Regional School Reopening Task Forces to meet virtually to discuss nine key topics in schools. More information on the four Task Forces can be found at:

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/board-regents-and-state-education-department-announce-regional-reopening-task-force>

Paul Gasparini asked about the timeline of the guidance from the Task Forces and if it will be similar. Karen said the Governor's office will be issuing its own guidance and it sounds like there will be two different timelines. She noted guidance will be presented to the Board of Regents on July 13<sup>th</sup> for review.

Robert indicated he was grateful to receive information on physicals. He's been asked about CPR/First Aid certification by member schools and will communicate any new information as it comes in.

#### **6. Update from NYS Department of Health – Dr. Marilyn Kacica & Jill Dunkel**

Paul introduced Dr. Marilyn Kacica, Medical Director for the Division of Family Health and Jill Dunkel, Division Director for the Division of Nutrition. Dr. Kacica indicated over 7 million confirmed cases worldwide with 2 million in the US at this point. On the NYSDOH web site, there's a special coronavirus section for guidance and information in addition to a COVID-19 tracker (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>). As of June 9<sup>th</sup>, there are 380,000 confirmed cases across the state. A map on the web site shows the impact in each region. NYSDOH continues to test across the state and they continue to see decreases in positive cases and hospitalizations. She also noted numerous demographical stats on the virus and indicated everything is fluid. On their web site, there will be an early warning dashboard and the NYSDOH is focused on identifying new cases and tracing their contacts to limit the spread of the virus.

#### **7. Guidance Documents**

Robert noted as he and Paul prepared for this meeting, he referenced a significant amount of guidance from other organizations including NFHS, CDC, NATA, US Lacrosse, Aspen Institute, NCAA, and KSI. He provided nine of those guidance documents to Task Force members prior to the meeting. Kathy Hoyt asked if it could be perceived we are leaving out sports. Robert indicated they are examples just to reference. Paul noted New Jersey has adopted NFHS guidelines to open schools. Robert stated many state associations were adopting that document.

## **8. Frequently Asked Questions**

Robert brought the FAQ document to everyone's attention that he released on May 7<sup>th</sup>. He asked, as a Task Force, if you feel there's a need for additional information, please inform him. Paul indicated it's a work in progress and will continuously be updated.

## **9. Options/Scenarios**

Paul outlined six scenarios for the Task Force that are all possibilities this fall. Robert asked if we are missing any scenarios that need to be included. Paul explained that regions and schools have different situations and we can't predict what will happen. Jim Dexter noted two major concerns for superintendents; 1) graduations, 2) the plans from the NYS Board of Regents. Adam Stoltman suggested releasing our work and discussions to get feedback from people and express our concerns.

## **10. Challenges to Overcome**

Paul, Robert and the committee discussed the challenges ahead including the desire for decisions, the unknown, rapidly developing information, reliance on state restrictions, ensuring safety, and regional differences.

## **11. Review of Task Force Fundamental Questions / #12 Review of Task Force Key Priorities**

Paul combined #11 and #12 and indicated we have already released information on FAQs. Karen clarified NYSED is not going to have schools submit a plan to them. Paul Gasparini thought schools will need to submit a plan to the Governor. He also suggested the NYSPHSAA Task Force be a coordinating body.

## **13. Review of NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Survey Results**

Robert thanked Dr. Jim Wright for his assistance with the survey and Jim shared the screen to review results. Jim highlighted the data and results of the survey. He indicated since there were 4,500 coaches, he sorted out all the data by category so one category didn't skew the data. Jim Osborne asked if this survey will be provided to NYSPHSAA membership. Robert said he released it on Twitter this morning. The survey results provided evidence of concerns related the returning to school and the safety of students, coaches, and officials. The survey also indicated the membership is less concerned with the hosting of state championships and fans attending games.

## **14. Summer Conditioning Guidance**

Robert referenced page 12 of the meeting packet and asked the Task Force if this is something that is needed and if they want it sent to our membership. He asked this because NYSPHSAA does not regulate off-season workouts but thought it would be beneficial to member schools as they prepare to open school campuses once they enter Phase 4. He also referenced the simplicity of the information and guidance. Adam Stoltman stated if we never sent anything out before, should we now or just leave it to schools. He indicated if we do send it out, then revising the section with lacrosse would be helpful. Carl Normandin said he would be in favor of sending this document out with revisions to the FAQ's specifically adding updates on the APP information, school physicals and clarity on school facilities. Scott Barker also supported sending this document out to schools and wanted the information about school facilities opening to be included. Chris Ceruti agreed with Carl and feels something should be released from the Task Force. Jim Mackin brought up he'd like to see something in a video format. Jim also asked NYSDOH about the language for opening. Jim Wright said we should be cautious about what we put out since things are always changing. A document is more editable. Robert stated he was complimented on the simplicity of the document and that may be the way to go so that it can be distributed to coaches, parents, etc before seasons begin. Carl requested a notation be placed on any information that is done that "as of June x, these are the guidelines..." so it is known what the information is at the time. Paul asked if the summer guidance document is OK to send out. Rick Knizek asked if schools will adopt NFHS Phase 1 only. He said information will change. Robert indicated he was not sure if there would be an update but did note other state associations were adopting it. He indicated this Task Force only makes recommendations and guidance for schools; it does not govern the schools. Jim Mackin asked if the summer guidance document needs to go to the Executive Committee for approval.

Robert said it is only guidance since the Task Force has no regulatory authority. He added it would not need approval since it is not requiring schools to follow. Dr. Ivan Katz asked about the use of language pertaining to phased entries. Its not the same in the NFHS and our state. Robert indicated we will be specific about the New York phases in the document. He also emphasized it's a draft so do not distribute the document. He will revise it, date it and distribute. He noted one of the outcomes of today's Task Force meeting was to release summer guidance to schools. Robert complimented Director of Marketing Chris Joyce on the layout and design of the document.

#### **15. Addressing Guidance**

Robert explained as we get more information from the Governor, please provide information to him and Paul, and they will get it out to the Task Force. Robert said that as guidance is provided from Governor Cuomo, the NYSDOH and NYSED, proposals will need to be considered by the Task Force. Robert asked that the Task Force share ideas with the Task Force before distributing proposals to their Section or league.

#### **16. Media Inquiries & Social Media**

Robert stated members of the Task Force will be contacted for information on our discussions. It is important to direct all inquiries to our office for one universal response. He indicated the Director of Communications, Chris Watson, is on the call so he is aware of the discussion today, as is Assistant Director Joe Altieri, who is taking notes and writing a meeting summary to ~~get~~ provide to the membership.

#### **17. Next Steps**

Paul indicated as we get information from the Governor, it is important to examine and distribute ASAP.

#### **18. Next Meeting**

June 25<sup>th</sup> for the next meeting was a conflict for a couple of committee members therefore Robert will send out a Doodle Poll to set a new meeting date.

#### **OTHER**

- Paul recapped a couple items from the meeting. 1) release summer guidance document and 2) FAQ updates.
- Scott Barker asked about the communication plan for this meeting. Robert indicated Joe Altieri was handling a summary. The task force would receive a copy of the summary today for their review with the goal of releasing the meeting report today.
- Adam Stoltman commented he was thankful to have the Governor's Office, NYSDOH, and NYSED all together on this committee to hopefully work with us on the same timeline. Matt Walentuck asked if Robert can get clarification from NYSED on the CPR/First Aid courses. Robert responded that Daryll Daily said that information would be coming out any day now.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Paul adjourned the meeting at 11:04 am.

*Minutes respectfully taken and submitted by NYSPHSAA Assistant Director Joe Altieri; reviewed/approved by President and Chair Paul Harrica & Executive Director Robert Zayas on 6/11/20 @ 9:05 am, prior to distribution*