

Basketball Season at School District 189 In Jeopardy: East St. Louis Urges Unification Of IDPH, Governor and IHSA's Decision

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EAST ST LOUIS – The East St. Louis School District 189 issued statements on Saturday in regard to the upcoming boys' and girls' high school basketball seasons for the Flyers. The East St. Louis District said it feels there has to be an agreement between

the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois High School Association and Gov. J.B. Pritzker to proceed with the season because of the liability involved.

East St. Louis School District 189 said in the statement that it is committed to providing athletic opportunities for student-athletes consistent with guidance from state agencies regarding health and safety during COVID-19 Pandemic conditions.

Because of the potential of losing state funding and facing penalties, other area school districts and boards will be wrestling with the same decision about the fate of basketball unless there is a compromise reached.

The IDPH and Gov. Pritzker moved basketball to a "high-risk" sports status, which would push the season off, but the IHSA decided to move ahead with basketball with an Oct. 27 announcement following a board meeting.

"While IHSA has a different opinion than IDPH and Governor Pritzker on how to proceed with basketball season, it has placed school districts in an unfortunate position of choosing to side with the Governor and IDPH or IHSA," the East St. Louis School District said. "Legal counsel has advised our district that it may be taking on significant liability should we choose to proceed with basketball given the fact that IDPH and Governor Pritzker advised against proceeding with basketball season at this time. Governor Pritzker and the Illinois State Board of Education have noted that schools that do not follow the Governor's directives may be subject to "other ramifications that may negatively impact school communities."

The East St. Louis School District continued: "While our district has a desire to participate in basketball seasons for both girls and boys, we feel strongly that the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), and Governor Pritzker need to reach an agreement in the guidance being provided to school districts in the state of Illinois.

"We hope that the governing agencies involved reach a consensus in the guidance being provided to school districts regarding athletic participation when providing direction moving forward. Also and very importantly, we hope the agreement reached by IDPH, Governor Pritzker and IHSA will be driven by the health and safety of everyone and consistent with the advice given by medical experts and scientists."