



**SOUTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**November 24, 2020**

**10:30 a.m. CT**

**Pierre, South Dakota**

**Board will participate via Zoom.**

**Office will be open to the public, meeting audio will be live-streamed.**

Call the meeting to order and establish a quorum

**Board Members:**

Criag Cassens, Chair- Faulkton  
Mark Murphy- Aberdeen Central  
Marty Weismantel- Groton Area  
Michael Talley- RC Central

Randy Soma, Vice Chair- Brookings  
Barry Mann- Wakpala  
Dr. Jerry Rasmussen- Dakota Valley  
Tom Culver- Avon

ITEM #1 – Approve the agenda.

ITEM #2- Public Forum

ITEM #3 – Consider request from Crazy Horse, Little Wound, and Pine Ridge High School

ITEM #4 – Discussion on Competition start dates for Winter Activities

ITEM #5 – Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Daniel Swartos  
SDHSAA Executive Director

**Little Wound School Board**  
Misty Hunter  
Cecelia Fire Thunder  
Nicole Little Whiteman  
Linda May  
Raymond Janis

**Little Wound School Board**  
**Little Wound School**  
P.O. Box 500  
Kyle, South Dakota 57752  
Website: [www.littlewound.us](http://www.littlewound.us)

**Office of the Superintendent**  
Telephone:  
605-455-6174  
Fax:  
605-455-2340



November 10, 2020

Dr. Dan Swartos, Executive Director  
South Dakota High School Activities Association  
804 N. Euclid Ave., Suite 102  
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Dr. Swartos:

Covid 19 has disrupted everyone's lives, including the lives of our Tribal school students. Because of federal Covid-19 restrictions, our Tribal Schools, including: Crazy Horse, Oglala Lakota County Tech, Pine Ridge, Red Cloud, and Little Wound High Schools, are now, and will continue to be, limited in the educational opportunities that they can offer to their students, including restrictions which prohibit them from offering high school sports.

On March 26, 2020, the Oglala Sioux Tribe adopted its first Shelter in Place Ordinance # 20-18, which remains in effect until rescinded. The limitations imposed by this Tribal Ordinance, required all Tribal schools on the Pine Ridge Reservation to close, and to begin distance learning programs for their students. Also in March of 2020, the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) began issuing directives which led to the closure of most in-school building student activities at all BIE funded schools. While the BIE is currently working with our schools on Covid-19 re-opening plans, our schools still have not been assured of when they will be able to re-open and for what academic and athletic activities.

As a result of this Tribal Ordinance, and any number of federal directives from the U.S. Department of Interior, our Tribal schools were unable to offer football or volleyball to our students this school year. They also have not been able to open any 2020-2021 basketball programs to their students. These restrictions have been especially difficult on our seniors, who have looked forward to this exciting period of their lives since they entered high school. For many, that senior year has always included the excitement of participating, one last time, as a member of their High School basketball, wrestling, volleyball or other sports team.

We do not have to tell any of you how important High School Athletics is to our players, their families and their surrounding communities. We all arrange our schedules around the big game. Additionally, athletics are an exceptional tool to help our Tribal school students secure scholarships that they need to be able to attend college. Participation in athletics is also essential to improve their chances of securing a better job or a better chance of obtaining a spot in a key military or other post-secondary training program. In fact, the South Dakota High School Activities Association, itself, was formed and continues to exist, because it recognizes the important role that High School Athletics plays in the lives of all of our students and our individual communities.

Our Tribal school Indian educators and our Tribal school families know all of this. That is why we do everything in our power to make athletics a part of our High School program. This is also why our students and their families are so deeply torn over what to do about the Covid-19 disruption of their High School's athletic season. Unlike other small communities, a large percentage of our Tribal school families live in multi-generational housing, where the risk of transferring Covid -19 to medically vulnerable family members is very high. Tribal reservation communities have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, and our families. The CDC has already confirmed that indigenous people are five (5) times more likely to be hospitalized as a result of

Covid-19 and three and one half (3.5) times more likely to die from this terrible disease. This has led our tribal governments to prioritizing health over all else.

Our Tribal Indian educators are also concerned about our inability to ensure the safety of all of the students who participate in athletics at this time. This is because the current funding limitations and federal restrictions are limiting their ability to guarantee that all of our facilities are maintained in the highly safe and sanitary way that Covid-19 prevention now requires.

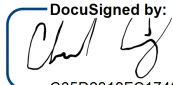
No one saw this coming. That is why the current South Dakota High School Activity Association rules are not designed to address the Covid-19 pandemic, and do not protect, for example, the right of a Tribal school student, or any other student who is denied the right to play this year because of Covid-19 school or travel restrictions, the right to play next year if he or she turns twenty before the beginning of next year's athletics season. Those same rules also do not afford our Tribal school students a quick and easy way to obtain a waiver to play at another school, even though for most of our Tribal school students that would be a profound practical and economic hardship. The SDHSAA contain rules related to HIV, and Hepatitis B, but no rules related to Covid-19.

Because we have no reason to believe that anyone in the SDHSAA wishes to see our young Tribal school athletes treated unfairly in any way, we are proposing the following amendments and additions to the SDHSAA rules that would be applicable solely for the 2020-2021 athletic season-

1. Allow our Tribal schools and all on-reservation State Schools which are unable to participate in this year's athletic season, due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and other applicable laws, to develop their own winter and spring athletics leagues which would begin shortly after a Covid-19 vaccine is widely available, without interfering with those schools' rights to remain in the SDHSAA, and without penalizing the students who participate in that temporary athletic league.
2. Make the changes necessary to SDHSAA sports eligibility rules, to allow any current student, who is prohibited from participating in any sport in the 2020-2021 season because of school and legal Covid-19 restrictions, and any student who chooses to sit out of a sport in the 2020-2021 season because of Covid-19 concerns, including those who will turn 20 years of age, to participate in a full season of High School athletic activities next year. We are not trying to make any type of permanent change to the SDHSAA's age restrictions or player eligibility rules, we just want to protect these young athletes who are facing a problem that none of us anticipated. Fundamental fairness requires this.

We look forward to discussing these important issues with you and to working cooperatively to implement temporary policies that protect the health and safety of all of our students while still preserving the opportunities that High School athletics offer to all who participate. This is important. We do not remember who we sat next to in High School biology, but we remember who scored the winning basket in our High School's final game.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:  
  
C65D2313FC17404...

Charles Cuny, Jr.

Little Wound School Superintendent



**United States Department of Interior  
Bureau of Indian Education/Pine Ridge School  
Great Plains Region  
PO Box 1202  
Pine Ridge, SD 57770**



November 12, 2020

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South Dakota High School Activities Association  
804 N. Euclid Ave., Suite 102  
Pierre, SD 57501

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Respectfully,

Michael Carlow  
Pine Ridge School Principal



# CRAZY HORSE SCHOOL

Tasunke Witko Owayawa

P.O. Box 260

245 Crazy Horse School Drive

Wamblee, South Dakota 57577

PHONE: (605) 462-6792 FAX: (605) 462-6510



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November 10, 2020

Dr. Dan Swartos  
Executive Director  
South Dakota High School Activities Association

Re: Alternate Sports 2021 and 5th Eligibility 2021/2022

Dear Dr. Swartos,

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Sincerely,



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Silas Blaine, Superintendent

[Silas.Blaine@12.sd.us](mailto:Silas.Blaine@12.sd.us)

(w) 605-462-6834

(c) 605-407-1320