

## Fall Sports Eligibility

### **Background:**

Iowa's public school buildings closed on or shortly after March 16, 2020, this year due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Iowa Department of Education allowed schools to decide whether or not they would require students to learn for the remainder of the school year.

Out of 327 public school districts in the state, 285 decided to make learning strictly voluntary. Only six provided required learning; Belmond-Klemme was one of the six. Thirty-six other districts provided a combination of voluntary and required learning.

The vast majority of Iowa student athletes and activity participants will have no academic eligibility standards to meet in order to participate in co-curricular activities when school resumes in the fall. This potentially places Belmond-Klemme student-participants at an unfair disadvantage.

According to our student handbook, "To maintain academic eligibility, students must have earned passing grades in ALL academic classes during the preceding grading period."

The school administration recommends the school board temporarily suspend academic eligibility standards for our students, so that they must meet the same requirements as the other students in Iowa.

### **Recommended Action:**

I recommend the board pass a resolution to make clear the district's intent to waive the academic eligibility standards for activity participation in the fall of 2020:

### **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DISTRICT'S HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TO WAIVE THE ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR ACTIVITIES**

**WHEREAS**, Iowa Code Ch. 279.8 authorizes local school boards to govern their respective districts, including adopting policies for their own governance; and

**WHEREAS** the Board may, by formal, action suspend or rescind board policy as deemed necessary, appropriate or in the best interests of the District; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national state of emergency and on March 15, 2020 Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds recommended closure

of all public and private K-12 schools in Iowa until April 13, 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 17, 2020 the Iowa Legislature passed and the Governor signed SF 2408 granting waiver of the instructional time requirements in Iowa Code Ch. 279.10 for all public school districts closing before April 12, 2020 in order to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19; and granting Governor Reynolds the ability to waive instructional time requirements for any public school district which closes on or after April 12, 2020 to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19; and

**WHEREAS**, the Iowa Department of Education issued COVID-19 Guidance: Provision of Continuous Learning. This guidance allows school districts to provide either voluntary educational enrichment opportunities to students or required educational services; and

**WHEREAS**, Belmond-Klemme Community School District is one of only six school districts out of a total of 327 public school districts in the state of Iowa to provide required educational services for all students kindergarten through grade twelve, and one of a small minority of high schools to provide required educational services for all high school students; and

**WHEREAS**, the required educational services provided to Belmond-Klemme students could place the school's activity participants at an unfair disadvantage compared to most other schools that are not held to the same academic eligibility standards due to the break in educational services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Belmond-Klemme Community School District Board of Directors hereby suspends its academic eligibility standards for the 2020-2021 school year that students must have earned passing grades in all academic classes during the preceding grading period.

This resolution passed and approved this 21<sup>st</sup> day of May, 2020.

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President, Board of Directors  
Belmond-Klemme Community School District