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Lake and Peninsula School District  
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To the LPSD board members, superintendents, and principals:

Hello from Tanalian School! I am one of nine seniors in my high school class and a volleyball and basketball athlete. It has come to my attention that there are many different ideas being discussed in regard to running each sports season safely and responsibly. I appreciate and thank you for trying to do what is best and to keep us all healthy. With that in mind, I am asking you to consider allowing sports to happen as normally as possible.

Research has shown and proven that children under the age of 18 are not at high risk for COVID-19. They may contract the virus, but according to the CDC, "Most reported SARS-CoV-2 infections in children aged <18 are asymptomatic or mild. Less is known about severe COVID-19 in children requiring hospitalization." (CDC). Of course, that would exclude adolescents who have underlying conditions that would put them at risk. Taking this into consideration, most of the athletes in our district are not at high risk for this virus. Leaving it up to each individual athlete and their parents/guardians to decide if they wish to participate in a sport could be a way to allow sports to proceed. Another way would be to limit the number of spectators, and/or screening each person who comes into the building for the games. Even having no spectators would be better than having no sports.

I understand that sports are a privilege provided by the district, not a right, but let me ask you this: how might taking away this privilege affect students' mental health and behavior? By taking away sports, you might see a spike in some students' use of tobacco, recreational drugs, alcohol, or vaping. Having an athletic program keeps these behaviors in check as student athletes are accountable and learn to take care of themselves. Also, the isolation students have been facing due to COVID is causing depression and higher suicide rates. Cancelling sports, while attempting to decrease the chance students will get sick, could actually increase the risk of suicide among youth. I understand that you are doing your best to make these important decisions, but I would ask you to consider the mental health of student athletes every bit as crucial as our physical health.

Again, I am thankful for your careful decisions in these strange times. I hope you will consider what I have stated in this letter. Please understand that I have a very high respect for all of you and the work you put into our school district, and I ask you to listen and take action with these things in mind.

Thank you,

Kathryn McGee