

On Sep 15, 2021, at 8:56 PM, Walsh, Rep. Jim <Jim.Walsh@leg.wa.gov> wrote:

Jill, Kevin and Vickie—

Hope you're all doing well.

Several local high school coaches—and some concerned parents—have reached out to me in the last day or so, concerned about the possibility of COVID outbreaks at Harbor high schools and the effects those might have on HS sports this fall. Of course, they're all looking with worry at the games lost to the Montesano HS football team at the beginning of its season. They've asked me to reach out to you with a suggestion about how the GH County Health Dept might proceed a little differently than it did in the Monte HS case.

Specifically, the coaches have pointed out that HS's in Cowlitz County—working with that county's Board of Health and Health Dept—have been able to use focused quarantines to isolate HS athletes who test positive for COVID without shutting down a sports program entirely. As I understand the Cowlitz approach, the HS and Health Dept require just the kids who tested positive and those in close contact with them (siblings, close friends who spend personal time together, etc.) to quarantine for 14 days. The rest of the athletes in the program can continue practicing and playing if: 1) they are willing to provide proof of COVID vaccination; or 2) are willing to provide a negative COVID test on a regular—I believe weekly—basis.

I realize that these COVID issues are complicated and difficult. But, as you know, it is important to a significant number of Harbor families that their kids can play HS sports. So, I'm sending you this note. I hope it makes sense to you to ask your Health Dept to speak with its equal numbers in Cowlitz and other nearby counties (in our HS sports leagues) about using a finer touch that it did with the Monte HS football team. While keeping student athletes and their families healthy.

All best—

Jim Walsh