

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA

Putting Montana Students First **A+**



August 25, 2020

Erin McGowan
AMPHO Executive Director
Smith and McGowan, Inc.
P.O Box 794
Helena, MT 59624

Dear Ms. McGowan,

I am writing in support of the Montana High School Association's (MHSA) letter regarding allowing school sports team players to be allowed to have certain spectators at games. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and MHSA have a long-standing partnership to support Montana students in school-sponsored extracurricular activities.

Montana families are seeking a sense of normalcy as school doors reopen this fall. For many families and students, that includes sports and extracurricular activities. Students interacting with their peers through sports and activities is crucial to their social-emotional and mental health. For families, not only is it an opportunity to support their child, it can be necessary for a parent to be present due to an unforeseen medical emergency.

We must all take safety precautions in light of COVID and I fully support the local control of our county health departments and school districts. However, I do believe that parents or guardians should be able to be present during their child's extracurricular activities.

I want to thank Montana's county health officers for their dedication to the health and safety of our communities in these unprecedented times, as well as their strong collaboration with Montana's schools.

Sincerely,

Elsie Arntzen
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction