

March 11, 2020

Email correspondence:

Dear State Directors:

We have an important update to share and we want you to be the first to know. Here is a statement that will be posted on our soinc.org website this afternoon on March 11, 2020:

*“Uncertainty surrounding the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the risk of transmission at large indoor gatherings, and multiple cancellations of state tournaments with more expected, has led the Science Olympiad Board along with leadership at North Carolina State University to **cancel the 2020 Science Olympiad National Tournament** held in Raleigh, NC, scheduled for May 15-16, 2020. According to the CDC, one of the greatest health risks is to the senior adult population, which makes up a significant portion of our teachers, coaches, officials, key personnel and volunteers. While we know this cancellation will be very disappointing to students, coaches, supervisors, and parents after all the hard work that has been put into their season, we must put health and safety first. We encourage teams to look ahead to preparations for next year. Our state leaders will focus on planning events and generating excitement for the upcoming season.”*

The Governor of North Carolina declared a State of Emergency on 3/10/20; a statement from NC State University about large campus gatherings was posted 3/11/20:

<https://www.ncsu.edu/coronavirus/extended-spring-break-online-classes-new-travel-restrictions/>

Eight states have concluded their State Tournaments as of 3/11/20. Southern California, New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Indiana and Ohio have experienced campus host cancellations of their State Tournaments already, and by the end of the week we expect up to a dozen more. The Japan Global Ambassador Team has cancelled. School closures and travel restrictions are complicating factors. Many districts have banned out-of-state travel completely.

Many of you are facing tough decisions in the 35+ states with reported coronavirus (COVID-19) cases. At this time, **we are recommending** that all Science Olympiad Division B and C qualifying tournaments on a forward-going basis be cancelled; we support any state’s decision to halt the 2019-2020 season. Please consider cancelling any state-sanctioned Elementary Science Olympiad Tournaments as well.

Meet with your host site coordinators and share this guidance.

Some states are fortunate that coronavirus (COVID-19) has not emerged yet; we understand your state Science Olympiad organization may wish to continue with tournaments, and we can help you make these decisions on a case-by-case basis. If you host a tournament, you will need to include the waiver language at the end of this message.

We do realize that different parts of the country are experiencing the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation disproportionately, but in this instance, we feel that supporting each other and showing solidarity to those students who are affected is important. Health and safety come first. Thank you for your leadership and for your dedication to Science Olympiad.

Sincerely,

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