“The NCHSAA is grateful for the improvements in the state’s COVID-19 metrics. These improvements provide the opportunities for North Carolina’s students to return to the classroom in many cases and resume the optimal learning environment that in-person learning provides.

“We are also excited for the opportunity to allow parents and some fans from the community the opportunity to attend sporting events in-person to support their loved ones.

“This has been a difficult year, and we know that the limitations have had particularly harsh effects on student-athletes and their families. We are ready to allow some sense of normalcy for these groups, and thankful that we have reached this point as a state. However, we want to do our part to make sure that this step forward does not lead to a step backwards. Simply put, we cannot afford further setbacks.

“On behalf of our student-athletes, our coaches, and athletic administrators, we ask citizens across our state to support their local high school teams by following the Governor’s and DHHS’s guidance which continues to be designed to limit the spread of COVID-19.

“As we begin relaxing some restrictions on spectators, please diligently work together to keep these opportunities available for student-athletes and spectators by wearing a mask, maintaining social distance and washing your hands regularly.

“If we continue to work together and respect those around us by following these simple steps, we are confident that our state will defeat this pandemic.”