

2014 -- S 2181

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS CONCUSSION ACT

Introduced By: Senators Felag, Walaska, and Metts

Date Introduced: January 30, 2014

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 16-91-1 and 16-91-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-91
2 entitled "School and Youth Programs Concussion Act" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **16-91-1. Findings of fact.** -- The general assembly hereby finds and declares: (1)
4 Concussions are one of the most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who
5 participate in sports and recreational activities. A concussion is caused by a blow or motion to the
6 head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. The risk of catastrophic
7 injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and
8 managed.

9 (2) Concussions are a type of brain injury that can range from mild to severe and can
10 disrupt the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur in any organized or
11 unorganized sport or recreational activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with
12 each other, the ground, or with obstacles. Concussions occur with or without loss of
13 consciousness, but the vast majority occurs without loss of consciousness.

14 (3) Continuing to play with a concussion or symptoms of a head injury leaves the young
15 athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury and even death. The general assembly also
16 recognizes that, despite having generally recognized return to play standards for concussion and
17 head injury, some affected youth athletes are prematurely returned to play resulting in actual or
18 potential physical injury or death to youth athletes in the State of Rhode Island.

19 (4) Concussions can occur in any sport or recreational activity. [furthermore, symptoms](#)

1 [of concussions may manifest themselves after the injury during school hours and in the classroom](#)
2 [setting](#). All [teachers, school nurses](#), coaches, parents, and athletes shall be advised of the signs
3 and symptoms of concussions as well as the protocol for treatment.

4 **16-91-3. School district's guidelines to be developed and implemented.** -- (a) The
5 department of education and the department of health shall work in concert with the Rhode Island
6 Interscholastic League to develop and promulgate guidelines to inform and educate coaches,
7 [teachers, school nurses](#), youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the nature and risk of
8 concussion and head injury including continuing to play after concussion or head injury. A
9 concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete
10 and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to the youth athlete's return to practice or
11 competition.

12 (b) School districts are required to use training materials made available by the United
13 States Center for Disease Control and Prevention entitled "Heads Up: Concussion in the High
14 School Sports/Concussion in Youth Sports" and any updates or amendments thereto, or training
15 materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The department of education shall post
16 training materials made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention on its
17 website. All coaches and volunteers involved in a youth sport or activity covered by this chapter
18 must complete a training course and a refresher course annually thereafter in concussions and
19 traumatic brain injuries. [Provided that the training and refresher course are low-cost or no cost, all](#)
20 [teachers and school nurses must complete a training course and an annual refresher course in](#)
21 [concussions and traumatic brain injuries](#). Training may consist of videos, classes, and any other
22 generally accepted mode and medium of providing information. ~~School districts are encouraged~~
23 ~~to have school nurses complete a training course in concussions and traumatic brain injuries.~~

24 (c) School districts are encouraged to have all student athletes perform baseline
25 neuropsychological testing, computerized or otherwise. Parents and/or guardians shall be
26 provided with information as to the risk of concussion and/or traumatic brain injuries prior to the
27 start of every sport season and they shall sign an acknowledgement as to their receipt of such
28 information.

29 (d) A youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a
30 practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time.

31 (e) A youth athlete, who has been removed from play, may not return to play until the
32 athlete is evaluated by a licensed physician who may consult with an athletic trainer, all of whom
33 shall be trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. The athlete must receive
34 written clearance to return to play from that licensed physician.

1 (f) All school districts are encouraged to have an athletic trainer or similarly trained
2 person at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute.

3 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS CONCUSSION ACT

- 1 This act would require teachers and school nurses to complete a low or no cost training
- 2 course and an annual refresher course in concussions and traumatic brain injuries.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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