

2013 SESSION
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SENATE BILL NO. 1326

Offered January 18, 2013

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia, relating to policies for concussion prevention in student-athletes.

Patron-- Marsden

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-271.5. Policies on concussions in student-athletes; recognition and prevention.

A. The Board of Education shall develop and distribute to each local school division guidelines on policies (i) to inform and educate coaches, student-athletes, and their parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussions, criteria for removal from and return to play, and risks of not reporting the injury and continuing to play and (ii) to provide a limitation on the amount of contact experienced by student-athletes playing contact sports. The Board's guidelines shall include information about the benefits of pre-concussion baseline testing and define what constitutes a contact sport.

B. Each local school division shall develop policies and procedures regarding (i) the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes and (ii) a limitation on the amount of contact experienced by student-athletes playing contact sports. Such policies shall require:

1. In order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information, in a manner approved by the Board of Education; and

2. A student-athlete suspected by that student-athlete's coach, athletic trainer, or team physician of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in a practice or game shall be removed from the activity at that time. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to have a concussion or brain injury shall not return to play that same day nor until (i) evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care provider as determined by the Board of Education and (ii) in receipt of written clearance to return to play from such licensed health care provider.

The licensed health care provider evaluating student-athletes suspected of having a concussion or brain injury may be a volunteer.

3. *Football practice shall be limited to two contact practices per week through the first four games of the season, and shall be limited to one contact practice per week through the remainder of the season and in any post-season play.*

C. In addition, local school divisions may provide the guidelines to organizations sponsoring athletic activity for student-athletes on school property. Local school divisions shall not be required to enforce compliance with such policies.

2. That the Board of Education, in developing the policies pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia, shall work with the Virginia High School League, the Department of Health, the Virginia Athletic Trainers Association, representatives of the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters and the Children's National Medical Center, the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Virginia College of Emergency Physicians, and other interested stakeholders.

3. That the policies of the Board of Education developed pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-271.5 of the Code of Virginia shall become effective on July 1, 2014.