



Virginia Commission on Youth 2015 Legislative Studies and Initiatives

STUDENT-ATHLETE CONCUSSIONS ADOPTED RECOMMENDATIONS IN BLUE

Findings	Recommendations and Public Comments
<p>Round Table Findings – Public Awareness/Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to provide more education to parents regarding concussions. There is also a need for better communication with low-income families. • There is a need to involve the community and reach out to different groups on concussion awareness. • There is also a need for better communication from the families to the schools. • There is a need for improved communication between the medical community and schools. The Prince William model serves as a good example on how this communication could work. • Concussion education should be included as part of the wellness message in the health curriculum at all levels of school. • Current education on concussion training may be redundant. Resources may need to be expanded. In addition, there is a need for active education to engage all stakeholders on how to respond to concussions. • The Virginia Department of Health could provide targeted and culturally responsive public service messages on concussion awareness around the state through the media, including concussion literature, posters, etc. • Request the Virginia Department of Health to provide regional information session on concussion guidelines and concussion awareness. • Technology/smart phone applications should be encouraged for concussion awareness/identification. 	<p><u>Recommendation 1</u> Request the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to assess the feasibility of conducting regional information training sessions on updated concussion guidelines and concussion awareness. VDH previously conducted these trainings after the adoption of the 2011 <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p> <p>The Departments are encouraged to use materials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other nationally recognized resources as a guideline for presenting information to communities. Information presented should focus on identification of concussions, the use of smart phone applications, short-term and long-term health effects of concussions, and safety precautions.</p>

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<p>Round Table Findings – Return to Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the Board of Education, Virginia has put in place guidelines for the development of policies and procedures on the identification and handling of suspected concussions. The Board’s <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i> include a “return to play” protocol which states that any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion must be removed from the athletic event and evaluated by a licensed health care provider. The <i>Guidelines</i> were amended in 2011 to include a “return to learn” protocol” with requirements that school personnel to be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by a student-athlete who has suffered a concussion or other head injury. Schools are also to accommodate the gradual return to full participation in academic activities by a student-athlete who has suffered a concussion or other health injury. • While the Virginia Board of Education amended the <i>Guidelines</i> for return to learn, approximately 33% of Virginia’s school divisions do not have return to learn policies. Return to learn should be mandated. • Outcomes for return to learn should be identified as a means of tracking progress (i.e. link academic, behavioral, and injury data). • Additional guidance for return to learn should be developed which includes practical strategies that teachers can implement. • There is a need for better communication between the health care community and the schools. Investigate using a parental consent agreement that could be included in the Board of Education’s <i>Guidelines</i>. Communication forms should be developed that schools could use with families and the medical community. • Minimum standards for return to learn should be developed and such standards should incorporate feedback from the medical community and universities. Return to learn needs to address the school perspective. • Schools divisions need to identify the authority/person who determines whether a student is ready to return to play or return to learn. • Case management procedures should be in place for return to learn. • Teachers should receive professional development about return to learn. 	<p><u>Recommendation 2</u></p> <p>Request the VDOE to develop additional guidance for the return to learn protocols which may be included in the Board of Education’s <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>. Guidance should include case management procedures for return to learn, minimum standards for return to learn, and practical strategies for teachers to implement in the classroom. In addition, the <i>Guidelines</i> should include template communication consent forms that school divisions may use to help assist with the sharing of information between schools, families, and the medical community. School divisions should be encouraged to identify a person within school/school division to ensure that the return to learn protocol is being followed.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current education on concussion training may be redundant. Resources may need to be expanded 	
<p>Round Table Findings – Legislative Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A survey conducted by the Commission on Youth and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) revealed that a significant percentage of schools have not implemented a return to learn protocol. The 2011 legislation required the Virginia Board of Education to adopt guidelines for return to learn but did not propose a deadline for local school divisions to do so. About 33% of Virginia’s school divisions do not currently have a return to learn protocol. The current language in the <i>Code of Virginia</i> should be enforced regarding return to learn protocols for student-athlete concussions. The <i>Code of Virginia</i> should be amended to include a date for schools to have a return to learn policy in place. The <i>Code of Virginia</i> should be amended to include all students, not just student-athletes. 	<p><u>Recommendation 3</u> Amend § 22.1-271.6 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> to require local school divisions develop policies and procedures regarding "Return to Learn Protocol" by July 1, 2016, consistent with either the local school division's policies and procedures or the Board's <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 4</u> Amend § 22.1-271.6 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i> to change the group covered by the statute from student-athlete to student.</p>
<p>Round Table Findings – Best Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing equipment checks (i.e. fitting and use) should be encouraged. A resource should be developed for schools that describes how other school divisions are executing their policies on student-athlete concussions. Such a resource can help connect schools that do it well with schools that are having difficulty with either developing policies or implementing them. 	<p><u>Recommendation 5</u> Request the Virginia Department of Education convene a stakeholder team to provide best practices resources for school divisions to use which outlines what other school divisions are doing with their policies on student-athlete concussions. Such resources shall help connect schools that do it well with schools that are having difficulty either developing policies or implementing them.</p>
<p>Round Table Findings – Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of resources across the Commonwealth. Special funding should be provided for low density/low poverty areas, (i.e. Southwest Virginia) for additional supports in dealing with concussions. Other funding sources, such as federal Perkins funding, should be evaluated to ascertain if it can be accessed to help train certified athletic trainers (ATC). Funding should be provided through the Standards of Quality (SOQ) for an athletic trainer in every school division. Funding should be provided through the SOQ for a school nurse in every school division. 	<p><u>Recommendation 6</u> Introduce a budget amendment to provide funding for low population density/poverty areas for additional supports in assisting students with concussions to return to the classroom successfully. Funding may be used for a licensed school nurse position employed by the school division, a licensed nurse contracted by the local school division, or a certified athletic trainer. Funding shall be used to support the return to learn protocol as defined by the Board of Education’s <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p> <p><u>Recommendation 7</u></p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding should be provided for an independent assessment on how school divisions are doing with their student-athlete concussion policies. 	<p>Request VDOE contact school divisions identified by the Virginia Commission on Youth as either not having a policy regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes or that have missing components, such as annual parental review of the division's concussion policies. VDOE will work with these school divisions to provide technical assistance and resources so that these divisions expeditiously adopt policies that fulfill the requirements set forth in the Board of Education's <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p>
<p>Round Table Findings – Eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle schools are not members of the Virginia High School league. While some school divisions, such as Prince William, have implemented concussion management program that includes middle schools, most school divisions do not have a formal policy. A Pre-Participation Physical Examination (PPE) should be required for middle school sports. Pre-participation concussion training requirements, similar to Prince William County, should be investigated for athletes in middle school. The Virginia High School League has been a valuable partner in the development of concussion management policies; they provide the “hammer” for enforcing the <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>. 	<p><u>Recommendation 8</u></p> <p>Introduce legislation requiring a Pre-Participation Physical Examination (PPE) for athletes participating in school-sponsored athletics in middle school.</p>
<p>Round Table Findings – Youth Leagues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a gap with recreation leagues and concussion management. Recreation/youth leagues that do not play on school property are not required to have a concussion management plans. Students that participate in these leagues may come to school after sustaining a concussion and school officials have no way of knowing whether the student had been injured. There is a need to encourage better communication with the schools and youth leagues. Investigate the feasibility of recreation sport leagues (the ones not playing on school property) developing concussion policies. Develop a youth league report card to see if they are meeting safety standards. 	<p><u>Recommendation 9</u></p> <p>Request the Virginia Recreational Sports Association, the Virginia Youth Football and Cheering League, and the Virginia Youth Soccer Association to investigate ways to encourage concussion education including: providing strategies in concussion prevention, the development of a youth league report card for meeting safety standards for their members; and the establishment of policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes, consistent with either local school division's policies and procedures or the Board of Education's <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p>

Findings	Recommendations and Public Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how to require recreation sports teams to have concussion policies that do not play on school property. Evaluate the feasibility of providing incentives/insurance breaks for youth leagues that have safety standards. 	
<p>Round Table Findings – Private Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What can be done to encourage private schools into adopting concussion policies? 	<p><u>Recommendation 10</u> Request the Virginia Council for Private Education to investigate ways to encourage concussion education, to provide strategies in concussion prevention, and to establish policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes, consistent with either the local school division's policies and procedures or the Board of Education's <i>Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes</i>.</p>