

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS' STUDENT-ATHLETE CONCUSSION POLICIES**

### **STUDY PLAN**

#### **Study Mandate**

- During the 2015 General Assembly Session, legislation was introduced by Delegate Luke Torian (House Bill 2006) and Senator Richard Stuart (Senate Bill 998). The legislation as introduced would have required each local school division to establish a management plan for implementation of and compliance with its policies and procedures on the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes.
- The Senate Education and Health Committee and the House Education Committee members reviewed these bills and determined that further study of this issue would be appropriate. The members of the Committees requested the Commission on Youth to study the provisions set forth in the legislation.

#### **Identified Issues**

- The Centers for Disease control defines a concussion as a “traumatic brain injury resulting from a blow, jolt, or bump that causes the brain to go quickly back and forth.”
- According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, concussions are considered to be one of the most complex sports injuries.
- Short-term effects may include: loss of consciousness, confusion, memory disturbance, slowed reaction time, headaches, dizziness, vomiting, mood changes and sleep alternation. Long-term effects may include: depression, mild memory disturbance, mild cognitive impairment, chronic headaches, irritability, vertigo, difficulty concentrating, impulsiveness and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- During the 2010 General Assembly Session, Senator Ralph Northam introduced Senate Bill 652 which directed the Board of Education to develop and distribute guidelines for policies, on concussions in student-athletes. Each school division was required to develop policies and procedures on identification and handling of suspected concussions. Student-athletes and parents or guardians were required to review annually information on concussions, and any athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion was required to be removed from the athletic event and evaluated by a licensed health care provider. Student-athletes recovering from a concussion were prohibited from returning to play until obtaining written clearance.
- In the 2014 General Assembly Session, House Bill 410 (Anderson) and Senate Bill 172 (Stuart) required each non-interscholastic youth sports program utilizing public school property 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's Guidelines for Policies on Concussions in Student-Athletes, or follow the local school division's policies and procedures regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student-athletes. The bill also added information on the effects of concussions on academic performance to the Board's Guidelines for Policies on Concussions.

## **Virginia Commission on Youth**

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**Adopted 05/05/15**

### **Study Activities**

- Review Virginia laws, policies and procedures
- Analyze local practices
  - Conduct a survey of school superintendents, school principals and athletic directors
- Analyze other states' practices and procedures
  - National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL)
- Convene a round table of stakeholders
  - Invite representatives from the impacted groups including:

American Academy of Pediatrics – Virginia Chapter	Virginia Association of School Nurses
Brain Injury Association of Virginia	Virginia Association of School Superintendents
Brain Injury and Sports Concussion Institute	Virginia Athletic Trainers' Association
Children's Hospitals	Virginia College Emergency Physicians
Children's National Medical Center	Virginia Counselors Associations
Local Recreation Clubs	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Medical Society of Virginia	Virginia Department of Education
Members of the Commission on Youth/General Assembly	Virginia Department of Health
Neuropsychologists	Virginia High School Coaches Association
Parents	Virginia High School League
Universities	Virginia Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
Virginia Academy of Family Physicians	Virginia School Board Association
Virginia Academy of School Psychologists	Virginia Physical Therapy Association
Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance	Virginia Medical Society for Sports Medicine
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals	Virginia Recreation and Park Society
- Develop recommendations
  - Synthesize findings
  - Develop recommendations
- Solicit feedback to recommendations
- Refine findings and recommendations
- Present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth
- Prepare final report