

2024 -- H 7871

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LC005075
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Representative Jacquelyn M. Baginski

Date Introduced: March 04, 2024

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-21-42. Athletic trainers required.**

4 [Effective August 1, 2025, all public high schools in each school district are required to](#)
5 [have a Rhode Island board of athletes-certified athletic trainer employed at the school for the sole](#)
6 [purpose of performing the functions of an athletic trainer.](#)

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

9 **16-91-3. School district's guidelines to be developed and implemented.**

10 (a) The department of education and the department of health shall work in concert with
11 the Rhode Island Interscholastic League to develop and promulgate guidelines to inform and
12 educate coaches, teachers, school nurses, youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the
13 nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including continuing to play after concussion or head
14 injury. A concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth
15 athlete and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to the youth athlete's return to practice or
16 competition.

17 (b) School districts are required to use training materials made available by the United
18 States Center for Disease Control and Prevention entitled "Heads Up: Concussion in the High
19 School Sports/Concussion in Youth Sports" and any updates or amendments thereto, or training

1 materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The department of education shall post
2 training materials made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Rhode
3 Island Interscholastic League on its website. All coaches and volunteers involved in a youth sport
4 or activity covered by this chapter must complete a training course and a refresher course annually
5 thereafter in concussions and traumatic brain injuries. All school nurses must complete a training
6 course and an annual refresher course in concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Teachers and
7 teachers' aides are strongly encouraged to complete the training course in concussions and
8 traumatic brain injuries. Training may consist of videos, classes, and any other generally accepted
9 mode and medium of providing information.

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

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

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

20 (f) All school districts are ~~encouraged~~ required to have an athletic trainer, ~~or similarly~~
21 ~~trained person, at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute~~ pursuant to § 16-21-
22 42.

23 SECTION 3. Section 16-91.1-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-91.1 entitled "The
24 Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

25 **16-91.1-3. School districts' guidelines to be developed and implemented.**

26 (a) The department of education and the department of health shall promulgate guidelines
27 to inform and educate coaches, teachers, school nurses, youth athletes, and their parents and/or
28 guardians about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated
29 with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms: fainting or seizures
30 during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness, racing heart rate and
31 extreme fatigue.

32 (b) School districts may use training materials made available at no cost to the school
33 district by organizations such as Simon's Fund, Parent Heart Watch, Sudden Arrhythmia Death
34 Syndromes Foundation, or training materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The

1 department of education shall post links to training materials on its website. All coaches and
2 volunteers involved in a youth sport program or activity covered by this chapter must complete a
3 training course that may be completed online about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac
4 arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing
5 symptoms including: fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest
6 pains, dizziness, racing heart rate and extreme fatigue. Training may consist of videos, classes, and
7 any other generally accepted mode and medium of providing information.

8 (c) Parents and/or guardians shall be provided with information as to the nature and
9 warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest prior to the start of every sport season.

10 (d)(1) A student who, as determined by a game official, coach from the student's team,
11 certified athletic trainer, licensed physician, or other official designated by the student's school
12 entity, exhibits signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest while participating in an athletic activity
13 shall be removed by the coach from participation at that time, subject to subsection (d)(3) of this
14 section.

15 (2) If a student is known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest at
16 any time prior to or following an athletic activity, the student shall be prevented from participating
17 in an athletic activity, subject to subsection (d)(3) of this section.

18 (3) A student removed or prevented from participating in an athletic activity under
19 subsections (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section shall not return to participation until the student is
20 evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed physician, certified
21 registered nurse practitioner, or cardiologist.

22 (e) All school districts are ~~encouraged~~ required to have an athletic trainer, ~~or similarly~~
23 ~~trained person,~~ at ~~all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute~~ pursuant to § 16-21-
24 42.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

- 1 This act would require all school districts to have an athletic trainer at each high school
- 2 within the district.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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