

**2010 -- S 2034 SUBSTITUTE A AS AMENDED**

LC00011/SUB A/3

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2010**

**A N A C T**

**RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Introduced By: Senators Felag, C Levesque, Bates, and Sosnowski

Date Introduced: January 13, 2010

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended  
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 91

4 SCHOOL AND YOUTH PROGRAMS CONCUSSION ACT

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

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

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

1 potential physical injury or death to youth athletes in the State of Rhode Island.

2 (4) Concussions can occur in any sport or recreational activity. All coaches, parents, and  
3 athletes shall be advised of the signs and symptoms of concussions as well as the protocol for  
4 treatment.

5 **16-91-2. Definitions. -- (a) For the purpose of this section, the term "youth sports**  
6 **programs" means any program organized for recreational and/or athletic competition purposes by**  
7 **any school district or by any school participating in Rhode Island Interscholastic League**  
8 **Competition, and whose participants are nineteen (19) years of age or younger.**

9 **16-91-3. School district's guidelines to be developed and implemented. -- (a) The**  
10 **department of education and the department of health shall work in concert with the Rhode Island**  
11 **interscholastic league to develop and promulgate guidelines to inform and educate coaches, youth**  
12 **athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury**  
13 **including continuing to play after concussion or head injury. A concussion and head injury**  
14 **information sheet shall be signed and returned by the youth athlete and the athlete's parent and/or**  
15 **guardian prior to the youth athlete's return to practice or competition.**

16 (b) School districts are required to use training materials made available by the United  
17 States Center for Disease Control and Prevention entitled "Heads Up: Concussion in the High  
18 School Sports/Concussion in Youth Sports" and any updates or amendments thereto, or training  
19 materials substantively and substantially similar thereto. The department of education shall post  
20 training materials made available by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention on its  
21 website. All coaches, trainers, and volunteers involved in a youth sport or activity covered by this  
22 chapter must complete a training course in concussions and traumatic brain injuries. Training may  
23 consist of videos, classes, and any other generally accepted mode and medium of providing  
24 information.

25 (c) School districts are encouraged to have all student athletes baseline or "impact" tested  
26 prior to the start of every sport season. Parents and/or guardians shall be provided with  
27 information as to the risk of concussion and/or traumatic brain injuries prior to the start of every  
28 sport season and they shall sign an acknowledgement as to their receipt of such 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 and until the athlete receives written clearance to  
33 return to play from that licensed physician.

34 (f) All school districts are encouraged to have an athletic trainer or similarly trained

1 [person at all recreational and athletic events addressed by this statute.](#)

2           **16-91-4. All other youth sports program.** – [All other youth sports programs not](#)  
3 [specifically addressed by this statute are encouraged to follow the guidance set forth in this](#)  
4 [statute for all program participants who are age nineteen \(19\) and younger.](#)

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION

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1           This act would require school districts to work with the Rhode Island interscholastic  
2 league to develop guidelines for educating coaches and players in youth sports about the risks  
3 associated with concussions.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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