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H.335

Introduced by Representatives McCullough of Williston and Squirrell of

Underhill

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; head injury; collision and contact sports

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require elementary and secondary schools to take action to reduce the risk of head injury during athletic events.

An act relating to reducing the risk of head injury during athletic events

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 1431 is amended to read:

§ 1431. CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES

(a) Definitions. As used in this subchapter:

(1) “Coach” means a person who instructs or trains students on a school athletic team.

(2) “Collision sport” means football, hockey, lacrosse, soccer, or wrestling.

1 (3) “Contact sport” means a sport, ~~other than football, hockey, lacrosse,~~
2 ~~or wrestling,~~ defined as a contact sport by the American Academy of
3 Pediatrics.

4 (4) “Health care provider” means an athletic trainer, or other health care
5 provider, licensed pursuant to Title 26, who has within the preceding five years
6 been specifically trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and
7 other head injuries. Training pursuant to this subdivision shall include training
8 materials and guidelines for practicing physicians provided by the Centers for
9 Disease Control and Prevention, if available.

10 (5) “School athletic team” means an interscholastic athletic team or club
11 sponsored by a public or approved independent school for elementary or
12 secondary students.

13 (6) “Youth athlete” means an elementary or secondary student who is a
14 member of a school athletic team.

15 (b) Guidelines and other information. The Secretary of Education or
16 designee, assisted by members of the Vermont Principals’ Association selected
17 by that association, members of the Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust,
18 and others as the Secretary deems appropriate, shall develop statewide
19 guidelines, forms, and other materials, and update them when necessary, that
20 are designed to educate coaches, youth athletes, and the parents and guardians
21 of youth athletes regarding:

1 (1) the nature and risks of concussions and other head injuries;

2 (2) the risks of premature participation in athletic activities after
3 receiving a concussion or other head injury;

4 (3) the importance of obtaining a medical evaluation of a suspected
5 concussion or other head injury and receiving treatment when necessary;

6 (4) effective methods to reduce the risk of concussions occurring during
7 athletic activities; and

8 (5) protocols and standards for clearing a youth athlete to return to play
9 following a concussion or other head injury, including treatment plans for such
10 athletes.

11 (c) Notice and training. The principal or headmaster of each public and
12 approved independent school in the State, or a designee, shall ensure that:

13 (1) the information developed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section
14 is provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete's parents or
15 guardians;

16 (2) each youth athlete and a parent or guardian of the athlete annually
17 sign a form acknowledging receipt of the information provided pursuant to
18 subdivision (1) of this subsection and return it to the school prior to the
19 athlete's participation in training or competition associated with a school
20 athletic team;

1 (3)(A) each coach of a school athletic team receive training no less
2 frequently than every two years on how to recognize the symptoms of a
3 concussion or other head injury, how to reduce the risk of concussions during
4 athletic activities, and how to teach athletes the proper techniques for avoiding
5 concussions; and

6 (B) each coach who is new to coaching at the school receive training
7 prior to beginning his or her first coaching assignment for the school; and

8 (4) each referee of a contest involving a high school athletic team
9 participating in a collision sport receive training not less than every two years
10 on how to recognize concussions when they occur during athletic activities.

11 (d) Participation in athletic activity.

12 (1) Neither a coach nor a health care provider shall permit a youth
13 athlete to continue to participate in any training session or competition
14 associated with a school athletic team if the coach or health care provider
15 knows or should know that the athlete has sustained a concussion or other head
16 injury during the training session or competition.

17 (2) Neither a coach nor a health care provider shall permit a youth
18 athlete who has been prohibited from training or competing pursuant to
19 subdivision (1) of this subsection to train or compete with a school athletic
20 team until the athlete has been examined by and received written permission to
21 participate in athletic activities from a health care provider.

1 (3) A coach shall not permit a youth athlete to come into physical
2 contact or collide with another person or object in a manner that may cause a
3 concussion or other head injuries during a practice or training session for an
4 athletic event.

5 (e) Action plan.

6 (1) The principal or headmaster of each public and approved
7 independent school in the State or a designee shall ensure that each school has
8 a concussion management action plan that describes the procedures the school
9 shall take when a student athlete suffers a concussion. The action plan shall
10 include policies on:

11 (A) who makes the initial decision to remove a student athlete from
12 play when it is suspected that the athlete has suffered a concussion;

13 (B) what steps the student athlete must take in order to return to any
14 athletic or learning activity;

15 (C) who makes the final decision that a student athlete may return to
16 athletic activity; and

17 (D) who has the responsibility to inform a parent or guardian when a
18 student on that school's athletic team suffers a concussion.

19 (2) The action plan required by subdivision (1) of this subsection shall
20 be provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete's parents or
21 guardians.

1 (3) Each youth athlete and a parent or guardian of the athlete shall
2 annually sign a form acknowledging receipt of the information provided
3 pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection and return it to the school prior to
4 the athlete's participation in training or competition associated with a school
5 athletic team.

6 (f) Health care providers; presence at athletic events.

7 (1) The home team shall ensure that a health care provider is present at
8 any athletic event in which a high school athletic team participates in a
9 collision sport. If an athlete on the visiting team suffers a concussion during
10 the athletic event, the health care provider shall notify the visiting team's
11 athletic director within 48 hours after the injury occurs.

12 (2) Home teams are strongly encouraged to ensure that a health care
13 provider is present at any athletic event in which a high school athletic team
14 participates in a contact sport.

15 (3) A school shall notify a parent or guardian within 24 hours of when a
16 student participating on that school's athletic team suffers a concussion.

17 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

18 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.