
Education Committee

HB 2731

Brief Description: Reporting of student head injury information sustained during athletics and other activities.

Sponsors: Representatives Irwin, Doglio, Davis, Pollet and Leavitt.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) to require that member schools report information about each head injury sustained by a student in grades nine through twelve during activities overseen by the WIAA, and requires the WIAA to summarize and analyze the reported information annually.

Hearing Date: 1/27/20

Staff: Megan Wargacki (786-7194).

Background:

A head injury is an injury to the brain, skull, or scalp. A concussion is a head injury that affects brain function. The consequences of, and treatments for, a head injury vary greatly and depend on the cause and severity of the injury.

In Washington, policies for the management of concussion and head injury in youth sports have been in place since 2009, with the enactment of the Zackery Lystedt Law. This law requires that coaches, youth athletes, and parents be informed about the dangers of sports-related head injuries and that a youth athlete who has been suspected of getting a head injury be cleared by a trained and licensed health care provider before returning to play.

The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) has policies and resources addressing concussion education and management in youth sports. The WIAA is a nonprofit organization and rule-making body that consists of public and private middle and high schools that have volunteered to abide by the WIAA policies.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Since the early 1990's, the Washington Department of Health has required trauma care providers, but not youth coaches or schools, to submit information on the incidence, severity, and causes of trauma, including traumatic brain injury, to a state-wide registry.

In 2018, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began developing a National Concussion Surveillance System. One stated goal of the system is to provide national estimates of sports-related concussions among youth that occur both in and outside of organized sports. It is not yet know what the reporting requirements will be, including whether youth coaches or schools will be required reporters.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, the WIAA must require that member schools report information about each head injury sustained by a student in grades nine through twelve during activities overseen by the association. The WIAA must allow member schools with students in grades six through eight to opt into reporting head injury information.

At a minimum, the following information must be reported: student's grade and gender, whether the student had a previous concussion, the head injury event date and location, the type and level of activity that the student was participating in at the time of the event, whether it was a practice or competition, any known cause of the head injury event, when during the activity the injury occurred, whether protective equipment was worn on the injured student's head at the time of the event, the type of surface on which the head injury event occurred, who initially examined the student at the time of the event, whether the student was removed from the activity at the time of the event, and follow-up information related to whether the student was determined to have a concussion and whether the student was given a written authorization to return to the activity by the end of the season in which the event occurred.

Beginning October 1, 2021, and by October 1 annually thereafter, the WIAA must publish a report summarizing the head injury information received in the prior school year. The report must include rates, patterns, trends, and other relevant information.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2020.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.