

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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HOUSE BILL 768

Short Title: Heat Stroke Prevention/Student Athletes. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Richardson (Primary Sponsor).

For a complete list of Sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly Web Site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Education - K-12.

April 15, 2015

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND LOCAL BOARDS
3 OF EDUCATION TO ADDRESS HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES DURING SCHOOL
4 ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES AND TO RECODIFY THE STATUTORY PROVISIONS ON
5 CONCUSSION SAFETY AND EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

7 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 115C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
8 Article to read:

9 "Article 29E.

10 "Student Safety in Athletics.

11 **"§ 115C-407.40. Definitions.**

12 The following definitions apply in this Article:

13 (1) Athletic activity. – An activity offered to students in any of the following
14 circumstances:

15 a. Interscholastic athletics.

16 b. An athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic
17 athletics, that is sponsored by a school, including cheerleading, or
18 any other sports activities provided by a club or school-affiliated
19 organization that is school-sponsored.

20 c. Practices, interschool practices, and scrimmages for all of the
21 activities listed under this subdivision.

22 (2) Concussion. – A traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact
23 to the head that results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or
24 may not result in loss of consciousness.

25 (3) Heat exhaustion. – A heat-related illness resulting in the depletion of body
26 fluids and causing weakness, dizziness, nausea, and possible collapse.

27 (4) Heat stroke. – A heat-related illness in which the person's core body
28 temperature is greater than 105 degrees Fahrenheit, with complications
29 involving the central nervous system that occur after exposure to high
30 temperatures.

31 **"§ 115C-407.41. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke education; removal from athletic**
32 **participation.**

33 (a) The State Board of Education shall adopt guidelines and educational materials to be
34 used by local boards of education to inform students who participate in athletic activities and
35 those students' parents and coaches on (i) heat-related illnesses, including heat stroke and heat



1 exhaustion and (ii) the health risks associated with continuing athletic play or practice after
2 experiencing signs and symptoms of a heat-related illness. In developing these guidelines and
3 materials, the State Board may utilize existing materials on the signs, symptoms, and
4 prevention of heat-related illnesses, including guidelines on heat and humidity adopted by the
5 North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

6 (b) Each school year, prior to participation by a student in an athletic activity, the
7 student's parent or guardian shall sign and return to the student's school an acknowledgment of
8 receipt and review of an information sheet developed in accordance with materials provided by
9 the State Board of Education under subsection (a) of this section.

10 (c) Each local board of education shall adopt a mandatory heat stroke prevention
11 protocol for students participating in athletic activities consistent with the guidelines and
12 educational materials adopted in accordance with subsection (a) of this section. A student who
13 exhibits symptoms of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, as determined by a game official, coach
14 from the student's team, verified athletic trainer, licensed healthcare professional, or other
15 official designated by the school under the venue-specific emergency action plan under
16 G.S. 115C-407.43, at any time prior to, during, or following an athletic activity shall be
17 removed by the coach from participation in an athletic activity. The venue-specific emergency
18 action plan shall provide for circumstances in which specific cooling methods must be made
19 available during an athletic activity, including weather conditions requiring access to an
20 immersion pool. A student removed or prevented from participating in an athletic activity in
21 accordance with this subsection shall not return to participation until the student is evaluated
22 and cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed healthcare professional or other
23 official designated by the school under the venue-specific emergency action plan.

24 **"§ 115C-407.42. Concussion safety.**

25 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules governing interscholastic athletic activities
26 with regard to concussion safety for student athletes in middle schools and high schools that
27 provide for the following:

28 (1) All coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders, volunteers,
29 students who participate in interscholastic athletic activities, and the parents
30 of those students shall receive, on an annual basis, a concussion and head
31 injury information sheet. School employees, first responders, volunteers, and
32 students must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before they can
33 participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices,
34 or competition. Parents must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before
35 their children can participate in any such interscholastic athletic activities.
36 The signed sheets shall be maintained in accordance with subdivision (3) of
37 this subsection.

38 (2) If a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity exhibits signs
39 or symptoms consistent with concussion, the student shall be removed from
40 the activity at that time and shall not be allowed to return to play or practice
41 that day. The student shall not return to play or practice on a subsequent day
42 until the student is evaluated by and receives written clearance for such
43 participation from (i) a physician licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of
44 the General Statutes with training in concussion management, (ii) a
45 neuropsychologist licensed under Article 18A of Chapter 90 of the General
46 Statutes with training in concussion management and working in
47 consultation with a physician licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the
48 General Statutes, (iii) an athletic trainer licensed under Article 34 of Chapter
49 90 of the General Statutes, (iv) a physician assistant, consistent with the
50 limitations of G.S. 90-18.1, or (v) a nurse practitioner, consistent with the
51 limitations of G.S. 90-18.2.

- 1 (3) Each school shall maintain complete and accurate records of its compliance
2 with the requirements of this section pertaining to head injuries.

3 **"§ 115C-407.43. Venue-specific emergency action plans.**

4 A local board of education shall require each middle school and high school to develop a
5 venue-specific emergency action plan to deal with serious injuries and acute medical conditions
6 in which the condition of the patient may deteriorate rapidly. The plan shall include a
7 delineation of roles, methods of communication, available emergency equipment, and access to
8 and plan for emergency transport. This plan must be (i) in writing, (ii) reviewed by an athletic
9 trainer licensed in North Carolina, (iii) approved by the principal of the school, (iv) distributed
10 to all appropriate personnel, (v) posted conspicuously at all venues, and (vi) reviewed and
11 rehearsed annually by all licensed athletic trainers, first responders, coaches, school nurses,
12 athletic directors, and volunteers for interscholastic athletic activities."

13 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-12(23) reads as rewritten:

14 "(23) Power to Adopt Eligibility Rules for Interscholastic Athletic Competition. –
15 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules governing interscholastic
16 athletic activities conducted by local boards of education, including (i)
17 eligibility for student ~~participation~~-participation and (ii) student safety in
18 accordance with Article 29E of this Chapter. ~~With regard to middle schools~~
19 ~~and high schools, the rules shall provide for the following:~~

- 20 a. ~~All coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders,~~
21 ~~volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic athletic~~
22 ~~activities, and the parents of those students shall receive, on an~~
23 ~~annual basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet. School~~
24 ~~employees, first responders, volunteers, and students must sign the~~
25 ~~sheet and return it to the coach before they can participate in~~
26 ~~interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices, or~~
27 ~~competition. Parents must sign the sheet and return it to the coach~~
28 ~~before their children can participate in any such interscholastic~~
29 ~~athletic activities. The signed sheets shall be maintained in~~
30 ~~accordance with sub-subdivision d. of this subdivision.~~

31 ~~For the purpose of this subdivision, a concussion is a traumatic~~
32 ~~brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that~~
33 ~~results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not~~
34 ~~result in loss of consciousness.~~

- 35 b. ~~If a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity~~
36 ~~exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with concussion, the student~~
37 ~~shall be removed from the activity at that time and shall not be~~
38 ~~allowed to return to play or practice that day. The student shall not~~
39 ~~return to play or practice on a subsequent day until the student is~~
40 ~~evaluated by and receives written clearance for such participation~~
41 ~~from (i) a physician licensed under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the~~
42 ~~General Statutes with training in concussion management, (ii) a~~
43 ~~neuropsychologist licensed under Article 18A of Chapter 90 of the~~
44 ~~General Statutes with training in concussion management and~~
45 ~~working in consultation with a physician licensed under Article 1 of~~
46 ~~Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, (iii) an athletic trainer licensed~~
47 ~~under Article 34 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, (iv) a~~
48 ~~physician assistant, consistent with the limitations of G.S. 90-18.1, or~~
49 ~~(v) a nurse practitioner, consistent with the limitations of~~
50 ~~G.S. 90-18.2.~~

- 1 e. ~~Each school shall develop a venue specific emergency action plan to~~
2 ~~deal with serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which the~~
3 ~~condition of the patient may deteriorate rapidly. The plan shall~~
4 ~~include a delineation of roles, methods of communication, available~~
5 ~~emergency equipment, and access to and plan for emergency~~
6 ~~transport. This plan must be (i) in writing, (ii) reviewed by an athletic~~
7 ~~trainer licensed in North Carolina, (iii) approved by the principal of~~
8 ~~the school, (iv) distributed to all appropriate personnel, (v) posted~~
9 ~~conspicuously at all venues, and (vi) reviewed and rehearsed~~
10 ~~annually by all licensed athletic trainers, first responders, coaches,~~
11 ~~school nurses, athletic directors, and volunteers for interscholastic~~
12 ~~athletic activities.~~
- 13 d. ~~Each school shall maintain complete and accurate records of its~~
14 ~~compliance with the requirements of this subdivision pertaining to~~
15 ~~head injuries.~~

16 The State Board of Education may authorize a designated organization to
17 apply and enforce the Board's rules governing participation in interscholastic
18 athletic activities at the high school level."

19 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
20 the 2015-2016 school year.