

Freddie Woodson, Deputy Superintendent  
District/School Operations

**SUBJECT: REPORT OF CURRENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES RELATED TO STUDENT HEAD AND BRAIN INJURIES SUSTAINED DURING DISTRICT SPONSORED SPORTS AND ATHLETIC EVENTS**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

At the School Board meeting of February 10, 2010, the Board approved Agenda Item H-18, proffered by Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman, School Board Member, directing the Superintendent to review current practices and policies related to head and brain injuries sustained during district-sponsored sporting and athletic events and physical education classes and provide a report and recommendations to the School Board for the April 2010 School Board Meeting.

Staff from the Division of Athletics and Activities in conjunction with staff from Physical Education and Health Literacy prepared the report. As directed, the report includes, but is not limited to, measures, policies and existing Miami-Dade County Public School Board Rules that address the following:

1. The education and verification that every youth athlete, their parent(s)/guardian, coaches and athletic trainers understand the risks associated with concussions, head injuries, brain injuries and mild traumatic brain injuries (TBI);
2. The use of athlete and parent/guardian consent forms indicating their understanding of risks associated with head concussions, head injuries, brain injuries and TBI;
3. Practices and established protocol in place at school sites and sporting events when a student sustains a concussion or head injury;
4. Personnel required, by sport, at high school sporting events and athletic competitions;
5. Clarification of training requirements of personnel entrusted with evaluating students suspected of having sustained a head injury while at a district-sponsored sporting events.

The report and recommendations to the School Board are attached.

**RECOMMENDED:** That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, receive the report on current practices and policies related to head and brain injuries sustained during district-sponsored sporting and athletic events and physical education classes.

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**Report on Current Practices and Policies  
Related to Head and Brain Injuries Sustained  
During District-Sponsored Sporting and Athletic Events  
and Physical Education Classes  
April 2010**

Staff from the Division of Athletics and Activities in conjunction with staff from Physical Education and Health Literacy prepared this report.

The information delineated below is pertinent to high school athletics unless otherwise stated. This information describes current practices and policies related to head and brain injuries sustained during district-sponsored sporting and athletic events. Information related to middle school athletics is included in this report.

The current practices and policies related to physical education classes are addressed at the end of the report.

**District-Sponsored Sporting and Athletic Events:**

- 1) **The education and verification that every student athlete, their parent(s)/guardian, coaches and athletic trainers understand the risks associated with concussions, head injuries, brain injuries and mild traumatic brain injuries.**
  - All high school student athletes in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) must complete the Athletic Physical Form, M-DCPS FM-3439. This form must be signed by the student athlete's parent or guardian and notarized. Item Number 21 on this form requests that the student athlete and his guardian indicate if they have ever experienced a head injury or concussion.
  - A complete medical history of the student athlete must also be completed by the student's parent or guardian on FM-3439.
  - FM-3439 also requires that a physical examination must be completed by a licensed physician who takes all information in the medical history into account. If there is a question as to the status of a prior head injury or any injury, the student athlete will be referred to the appropriate specialist for further evaluation.
  - A student athlete must also complete the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Form titled, *Consent and Release form Liability Certificate* which addresses the risk of participating in high school athletics.
  - For middle school students, parents become initially involved when the student makes the team. The coach of the particular sport notifies the parent through the field trip permission form. The parent signs the form giving the consent that the child can participate in the particular sport. The

- coach through teaching, coaching, and team practices, discusses the medical risks associated with the sport with the student.
- 2) **The use of student athlete and parent/guardian consent forms indicating their understanding of the risks associated with head concussions, head injuries, brain injuries and Traumatic Brain Injury.**
- At the present time, there is no form specific to head concussions, head injuries and brain injuries that is to be signed by the student athlete and the student athlete's parent or guardian.
- 3) **Practices and established protocol in place at school sites and sporting events when a student athlete sustains a concussion or head injury.**
- At the high school level, every school has a certified athletic trainer who adheres to the M-DCPS Sports Medicine Emergency Action Plan. Serious head injury or concussion is listed on this plan.
  - All high schools implement the practices addressed in a memorandum from Mr. Freddie Woodson, dated July 21, 2005, **REPORTING OF SERIOUS INJURIES DURING INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PRACTICES AND EVENTS.**
  - High school athletic trainers complete the form entitled *Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form*.
  - All senior high schools are required to file an *Operational Protocol* with the Division of Athletics/Activities and Accreditation. These protocols address emergency procedures and clearly state that "all head injuries involving a loss of consciousness and/or memory shall be cleared by a physician prior to return to participation."
  - In middle schools, the coach notifies the main office in case of an athletic injury and the parent is contacted. If the injury is severe, the coach or a school administrator calls 911.
- 4) **Personnel required, by sport, at high school sporting events and competitions.**
- All high schools with athletic programs must abide by the Superintendent's Directive, dated June 2005, and place on file with the Division of Athletics and Activities the school site administrator or personnel who will be responsible for an athletic event in an administrative capacity.
  - The high school principal is required to be in attendance for all varsity football games. The principal may be in attendance for other sporting events, but he may also assign a designee.
  - A certified athletic trainer is on site at all varsity football games and at most other athletic competitions and practices.

- Certified athletic coaches must be present at all practices and competitions.
- At middle schools, when sporting events are held at the school site, the coach deals with injuries, safety factors and protocol.
- At the middle school district championships and/or meets, except for bowling, a certified athletic trainer is on site.

**5) Clarification of training requirements of personnel entrusted with evaluating students suspected of having sustained a head injury while at district-sponsored sporting events.**

- By State Statute, Title XXXII, Chapter 468, high school athletic trainers must be licensed and fully regulated by the State of Florida.
- All M-DCPS high school athletic trainers must supply a copy of their national and state certifications to the Division of Athletics/Activities and Accreditation on a yearly basis.
- The duties and responsibilities of the high school athletic trainer are enumerated in the M-DCPS Job Description for Athletic Trainer.
- All high schools with full time athletic programs have on staff a certified trainer who often makes these decisions.
- If the athletic trainer should not be available in the event of an athletic injury, schools are advised to call emergency rescue services.
- Coaches in middle schools are encouraged to take classes for certification. Among the classes they take are first aid, safety, CPR, etc.

**Physical Education classes:**

Although there is no formal program implemented to address head/brain injuries, through proper skill instruction in physical education, students are taught how to safely participate in sport and physical activities to avoid head/brain injuries. These include, for example, how to properly head a ball in soccer at the secondary school level, as well as, how to manage lanes in running and tag games to avoid head to head collisions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Information Technology Services should research, develop or recommend a computerized method of tracking all student injuries at a reasonable cost to the District.
2. M-DCPS senior high schools athletic trainers should apply for a grant from the Dade Schools Athletic Foundation to acquire a computerized method of tracking all high school athletic injuries including the tracking of all concussions.
3. Non-instructional coaches at the middle school level should continue to become certified by the State of Florida in athletic coaching. This would include training in CPR and student safety specifically in the event of a possible concussion.
4. Ms. Cheryl Golden, Instructional Supervisor, a member of the Florida Concussion Task Force, should share the task force information with senior high school athletic directors and athletic trainers. The information should also be shared with middle school athletic/activities facilitators.
5. The Florida Concussion Task Force final recommendations should be reviewed by Risk and Benefits Management and the School Board Attorney's Office prior to implementation by the District.
6. The Parent Academy should offer informational sessions to educate parents on the causes and the potential dangers of concussion.