

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2012 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1080
Ways and Means

(Delegate Walker, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Education - Student Athletes - Heat Acclimatization Guidelines

This bill requires the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), in collaboration with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, each local board of education, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA), the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association, and representatives of licensed health care providers who treat student athletes, to develop a model policy for preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes. Each local board of education must adopt preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes. The guidelines must include requirements for the duration of a practice time, a walk-through, and a recovery period during preseason practice.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2012.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: MSDE, in collaboration with other organizations, can develop a model policy for preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes using existing resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local boards of education can adopt preseason-practice heat acclimatization guidelines for student athletes using existing resources.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill defines “heat acclimatization” as enhancing an individual’s exercise heat tolerance and ability to exercise safely and effectively in warm to hot conditions. “Student athlete” is defined as a student who participates in an athletic program for high school students in a State secondary school that is a member of MPSSAA. The bill also defines “practice,” “preseason practice,” “recovery period,” and “walk-through.”

Current Law: MSDE and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene must jointly develop public standards and guidelines for school health programs and offer assistance to the local boards of education and local health departments in their implementation.

Background: Heat-related illnesses during practice or competition are a leading cause of death and disability among U.S. high school athletes according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The vast majority of heat-related illnesses occur in August, which is the preseason for fall sports, including football.

According to a policy statement released by the American Academy of Pediatrics in fall 2011, besides being poorly hydrated, the primary causes of heat-related illness in youth during sports and other physical activities in a hot environment include undue physical exertion, insufficient recovery between repeated exercise bouts or closely scheduled same-day training sessions, and inappropriately wearing clothing, uniforms, and protective equipment that play a role in excessive heat retention. One of the recommendations the policy statement gave for preventing heat-related illnesses was giving student athletes the opportunity to gradually adapt to sport participation or other physical activity in the heat by appropriate and progressive acclimatization.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, Department of Legislative Services

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