

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 679

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 12, 2021

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 679 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill provides that a student-athlete or cheerleader who sustains a concussion or other head injury is ineligible to return to competition or practice until the student-athlete or cheerleader returns to regular school activities and is no longer experiencing symptoms of the injury when conducting those activities. Under the bill, the return of the student-athlete or cheerleader must be in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations and any subsequent changes or other updates to those recommendations.

The bill also requires the Department of Education to revise its athletic head injury safety training program to include information on the CDCs' graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations. The department would revise the safety program whenever the CDC changes or otherwise updates the "Return to Play Progression" recommendations.

The bill also requires a school district to revise its written policy concerning the prevention and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries to include the CDCs' graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations. A school district would revise its written policy whenever the CDC changes or otherwise updates the "Return to Play Progression" recommendations.

The CDC has developed recommendations concerning a student-athlete's return to sports and activities following a concussion or other head injury. The CDC recommends that the student-athlete engage in a graduated, six-step "Return-to-Play-Progression" to ensure the student-athlete's safety and well-being.

The CDCs' "Return-to-Play-Progression" recommended time for a student's return to competition or practice is as follows: (1) back to regular activities (such as school); (2) light aerobic activity; (3) moderate activity; (4) heavy, non-contact activity; (5) practice and full contact; and (6) competition.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 225 (1R), which was also amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- to update references in the bill to the CDCs' graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations;
- require school districts to revise their written policies concerning the prevention and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries in the 2021-2022 school year rather than within 180 days of the effective date of the bill;
- require the Department of Education to revise the athletic head injury safety program whenever the CDC changes or otherwise updates the "Return to Play Progression" recommendations;
- require a school district to revise its written policy concerning the prevention and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries among student-athletes and cheerleaders whenever the CDC changes or otherwise updates the "Return to Play Progression" recommendations;
- provide that the return of a student-athlete or cheerleader to competition or practice after sustaining a concussion or head injury, or after being suspected of having sustained a concussion or head injury, be in accordance with any changes or updates to the "Return to Play Progression" recommendations; and
- make technical changes.