A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ENACT THE GFELLER-WALLER CONCUSSION AWARENESS ACT.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

TITLE OF ACT.
SECTION 1. This act may be known and cited as the Gfeller-Waller Concussion
Awareness Act.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATHLETIC CONCUSSION SAFETY TRAINING
PROGRAM.
SECTION 2.(a) The Matthew A. Gfeller Sport-Related Traumatic Brain Injury
Research Center at UNC-Chapel Hill in consultation with the North Carolina Medical Society,
the North Carolina Athletic Trainers Association, the Brain Injury Association of North
Carolina, the North Carolina Neuropsychological Society, the North Carolina High School
Athletic Association, Inc., and the Department of Public Instruction shall develop an athletic
concussion safety training program. The program shall be developed for the use of coaches,
school nurses, school athletic directors, volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic
athletic activities in the public schools, and the parents of these students.

SECTION 2.(b) The program shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
(1) Written information detailing the recognition of the signs and symptoms of
concussions and other head injuries.
(2) A description of the physiology and the potential short-term and long-term
effects of concussions and other head injuries.
(3) The medical return-to-play protocol for postconcussion participation in
interscholastic athletic activities.

CONCUSSION SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC
COMPETITION.
SECTION 3. G.S. 115C-12(23) reads as rewritten:
“(23) Power to Adopt Eligibility Rules for Interscholastic Athletic Competition. –
The State Board of Education may—shall adopt rules governing
interscholastic athletic activities conducted by local boards of education,
including eligibility for student participation. With regard to middle schools
and high schools, the rules shall provide for the following:
a. All coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders,
volunteers, students who participate in interscholastic athletic
activities, and the parents of those students shall receive, on an
annual basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet. School employees, first responders, volunteers, and students must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before they can participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices, or competition. Parents must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before their children can participate in any such interscholastic athletic activities. The signed sheets shall be maintained in accordance with sub-subdivision d. of this subdivision.

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

b. If a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with concussion, the student shall be removed from the activity at that time and shall not be allowed to return to play or practice that day. The student shall not return to play or practice on a subsequent day until the student is evaluated by and receives written clearance for such participation from (i) a licensed medical physician with training in concussion management or (ii) one of the following health care providers who has training in concussion management and is working in consultation with a medical physician: a neuropsychologist, a licensed athletic trainer, a licensed physician assistant, or a licensed nurse practitioner.

c. Each school shall develop a venue specific emergency action plan to deal with serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which the condition of the patient may deteriorate rapidly. The plan shall include a delineation of roles, methods of communication, available emergency equipment, and access to and plan for emergency transport. This plan must be (i) in writing, (ii) reviewed by an athletic trainer licensed in North Carolina, (iii) approved by the principal of the school, (iv) distributed to all appropriate personnel, (v) posted conspicuously at all venues, and (vi) reviewed and rehearsed annually by all licensed athletic trainers, first responders, coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, and volunteers for interscholastic athletic activities.

d. Each school shall maintain complete and accurate records of its compliance with the requirements of this subdivision pertaining to head injuries.

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

EFFECTIVE DATE.

SECTION 4. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.