



HB 4140 (2020)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Brain Injuries

Brain injuries are common among adolescents and pose a threat to their potential for academic, emotional, social and extracurricular success. Oregon has made meaningful progress in supporting the needs of student athletes who sustain brain injuries (typically concussions) by establishing criteria for when to remove a student from play, and how to clear them to return to sports. While these policies are limited to students who participate in OSAA regulated sports, they are very important for protecting student athletes, ensuring that they can focus on recovery rather than put themselves at greater risk of injury. However, there is also a growing body of research that demonstrates the importance of academic accommodations for brain injured students as they return to school. Unfortunately, schools, educators, and parents are frequently unaware of best practices and strategies for supporting students with brain injuries while they are in class, making it more difficult for them to heal, keep up with their work, and succeed.

OBJECTIVE

- Provide schools, educators, parents and students with a tool to help develop appropriate academic accommodations for students who are recovering from a brain injury.

KEY POINTS OF HB 4140

- Oregon Department of Education (ODE) would produce a form that describes academic accommodations that can be provided for a student who has been diagnosed with a brain injury and provides a mechanism to identify academic accommodations. This form would be distributed to public education programs in Oregon.
- When a student is diagnosed with a brain injury, and they, their parent/legal guardian, or an educator request access to the form, it will be made available to the person who requested it.

RELEVANT FACTS

- “Injuries of any severity to the developing brain can negatively impact children’s behavior and cognitive skills as they grow, placing them at risk for significant changes to their developmental trajectory across multiple domains,” ([Report to the U.S. Congress: The Management of Traumatic Brain Injuries in Children: Opportunities for Action](#), Centers for Disease Control, pg. 21, 2018)
- In 2014, the last year with available data, there were more than 837,000 emergency room visits for children that were related to traumatic brain injuries, ([TBI-related Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths](#), Centers for Disease Control, 2019)
- Some academic accommodations for a student recovering from a brain injury may include allowing extended time to complete assignments, demonstrating knowledge verbally instead of through writing, or letting students wear glasses or a hat in class to protect their eyes from dim classroom lighting ([Return to Academics Protocol After Concussion/mild TBI](#), Oregon School Activities Association, Center for Brain Injury Research and Training)