



To: Senator Wagner, Chair
Senator Thomsen, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

From: Sam Johnson, Past-President Oregon Athletic Trainers' Society

Date: February 18, 2020

Re: Support for HB 4140 – Return to School Accommodations Following Concussions

The Oregon Athletic Trainers' Society supports HB 4140 because we understand the importance of early management of concussion to ensure a quick return to health. Athletic trainers (ATs) are particularly invested in appropriate concussion management because in schools that have an AT, the AT is typically the licensed health care provider tasked with managing the care of the student-athlete with a concussion. In these cases, ATs serve as the case coordinator for the concussed student-athlete, collaborating with physicians to ensure a successful return to physical activity and other school personnel to ensure a successful return to academics.

Several studies have shown that schools that have an AT available have more concussion diagnoses than schools that do not – a positive considering early management is essential for optimal outcomes.^{1,2} Further, a recent investigative study found that schools in Oregon with an AT were more likely to use a progressive return to activity protocol than schools that did not.³ However, the gradual return to activity is not the only area that students need help with – returning to school often requires academic accommodations. This was detailed in the 5th International Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, which is the leading document on managing sport related concussions (SRC).

*Schools are encouraged to have an SRC policy that includes education on SRC prevention and management for teachers, staff, students and parents, and **should offer appropriate academic accommodation and support to students recovering from SRC.** Students should have regular medical follow-up after an SRC to monitor recovery and help with return to school, and students may require temporary absence from school after injury.*⁴ (Emphasis added)

ATs working in high schools have been using academic accommodation forms developed by the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) and the Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT). These forms are typically provided to the student to give to the physician for completion. One of the challenges is the school may not be receiving this form back. This bill begins to address this, by charging the Department of Education with developing a form that can be completed by school personnel. This will help by allowing the trained individuals at the school, including the AT, in requesting the appropriate accommodations for the students. Unfortunately, not all schools have access to AT or other personnel that can help manage the student's concussion. This bill helps as the new form will provide guidance for schools. Yet, it allows flexibility for the schools to adapt what works for their situation. HB 4140 is a good start to help schools – and more importantly the students who need assistance - without being overly burdensome.

The evidence is clear that *early diagnosis and management of concussion is critical.* This bill helps provide the necessary early support for our students to return to the classroom successfully. I hope you will support HB 4140.

Sincerely,

Sam Johnson, PhD, ATC

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2. Pierpoint LA, LaBella CR, Collins CL, Fields SK, Dawn Comstock R. Injuries in girls' soccer and basketball: a comparison of high schools with and without athletic trainers. *Inj Epidemiol.* 2018;5(1):29. doi:10.1186/s40621-018-0159-6
3. Rattling the data: Concussion investigation gleans lessons from public documents | InvestigateWest. <https://www.invw.org/2019/02/07/rattling-the-data-concussion-investigation-gleans-lessons-from-public-documents/>. Accessed September 17, 2019.
4. McCrory P, Meeuwisse W, Dvořák J, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport-the 5th international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. *Br J Sports Med.* 2017;51(11):838-847. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2017-097699