

**Sports Edition!**

# Current Events

*Committed to a Higher Standard*

Wisconsin Council  
of Religious &  
Independent Schools



May 16, 2012



**Save the date!**

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**WCRIS Leadership  
Conference**

**"Leadership In a  
Changing World"**

**February 8, 2013**

Country Springs Hotel  
Pewaukee, WI

Keynote Speaker:

**Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs**  
"Curriculum 21"

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[State Legislature...who  
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[American Federation for](#)

## WI's New Concussion Law

"When in doubt, sit them out!"

A concussion is a traumatic injury caused by an impact to the head or body which moves or twists the brain inside the skull. Medical research indicates adolescents are more susceptible to concussions than adults and take longer to recover. Less than 10% of concussions result in the loss of consciousness, making the injury difficult to diagnose, especially during the excitement of live competition.

[WI Act 172](#), effective on April 16, creates a new set of requirements applicable to all schools and athletic organizations with participants under the age of nineteen. The primary objective of WI Act 172 is to educate coaches, umpires, parents and athletes to recognize the signs of a concussion and take steps to remove affected athletes from competition until cleared by a health care professional with experience in treating head injuries.

The requirements of WI Act 172 are as follows:

- \* At the beginning of each athletic season, the person operating the youth athletic activity shall distribute a concussion and head injury information sheet to each person who will be coaching that youth athletic activity and to each person who wishes to participate in that youth athletic activity.
- \* No person may participate in a youth athletic activity unless the person returns the information sheet signed by the person **AND**, if he or she is under the age of 19, by his or her parent or guardian. This includes all coaches and umpires.
- \* A coach, umpire or health care provider (trainer) must remove any person suspected of sustaining a head injury during practice or competition until such person has received written clearance by a medical professional to return to play.

Individuals and organizations adhering to the requirements of WI Act

[Children](#)

[School Choice Wisconsin](#)

[WI Dept. of Public Instruction](#)

[Office of Non-Public Education](#)

[WIAA](#)

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172 are immune from civil liability for any injury resulting from a concussion except in cases of gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.

Listed below are template forms you may find helpful as you prepare for the requirements of WI Act 172.

- \* [Concussion Fact Sheet - Athletes](#)
- \* [Concussion Fact Sheet - Guardians](#)
- \* [Concussion Fact Sheet - Coaches](#)
- \* [Acknowledgment Form - Athletes/Guardians](#)
- \* [Acknowledgment Form - Coaches](#)

In addition, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) has prepared two important resources for coaches and other personnel. The first link below is a sideline assessment tool to help athletic personnel identify the early signs of a concussed player. The second link provides access to a free, on-line course for medical professionals involved in the early diagnosis of head injuries.

- \* [SCAT2 - Sideline Assessment Tool](#)
- \* [On-line Training](#)

WI Act 172 resources are also available on the [WCRIS website](#).

## States Should Eye WIAA/Private School Partnership

In the year 2000, the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) changed the rules to allow private schools to join the organization for the first time in their 105 year history. Led by then-Executive Director Doug Chickering, private schools were welcomed as equal partners into the association, resisting attempts to add enrollment multipliers like many other states. Ten years later, amidst discussions surrounding the participation of private schools primarily in boys and girls basketball, the WIAA reconfirmed the sentiment that no segment of the membership should be treated differently in regards to divisional placement by enrollments other than what their rules already provided.

Private schools in other states have not been as fortunate. Last April the [New Jersey](#) athletic association took the first step towards denying private schools participation in their state football tournament, proposing to end their season at the sectional finals. [North Carolina](#) took it one step further, pushing for an outright ban of non-boarding private schools from membership in the association. Similar discussions were recently held in [West Virginia](#).

While the trend is alarming, private schools in Wisconsin are insulated from the primary argument being used in other states. It is no

coincidence that our admission into the WIAA coincided with the passage of Wisconsin's open enrollment law in 2000, thereby allowing students to attend a public school outside the traditional geographic boundaries of their residence. Eliminating traditional public school boundaries erased the argument that private schools held an inherent advantage in attracting the best athletes to their programs.

That is not to say we can take our standing for granted. The WIAA receives constant pressure from their public school membership to level the playing field. And let's face it, private schools have achieved enough success in the state tournaments to warrant some attention. Fortunately, WIAA staff, now led by executive director, Dave Anderson, have found creative solutions to increase state tournament play for all members, avoiding the proposals being considered in other states.

The WIAA is the oldest athletic association in the country. Perhaps it would be a good idea for other states to learn from their experience.