



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

November 4, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: *Code of Virginia* Amendment Regarding Public Middle School Student-Athlete Pre-Participation Physical Examination

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that the 2016 General Assembly passed Senate Bill 665 amending the *Code of Virginia* to include § 22.1-271.7 requiring middle school students participating on or trying out for any school athletic team or squad with a predetermined roster to have a physical examination. The following is the amended section of the *Code*:

"No public middle school student shall be a participant on or try out for any school athletic team or squad with a predetermined roster, regular practices, and scheduled competitions with other middle schools unless such student has submitted to the school principal a signed report from a licensed physician, a licensed nurse practitioner practicing in accordance with his practice agreement, or a licensed physician assistant acting under the supervision of a licensed physician attesting that such student has been examined, with the preceding 12 months, and found to be physical fit for athletic completion."

School divisions across the Commonwealth provide middle school students with opportunities to participate in a variety of extracurricular physical activities. According to a recent poll conducted by the Virginia High School League, all school divisions which responded to the survey reported requiring middle school students to complete a physical examination prior to participation on any school athletic team.

The intent of this bill is to improve student safety, and not to exclude any student from participating on a school athletic team or squad due to the inability to access a physical examination. School divisions are encouraged to work with community partners, local health departments, physicians, and other medical service providers to remove barriers for participation by facilitating access for all students to secure physical examinations. Virginia [Family Access to Medical Insurance Security](#) (FAMIS) offers health coverage for children of eligible families. This health insurance coverage could cover physical examinations and other student health services.

In addition, parents should be informed of the amendment to the *Code* that now requires all middle school students participating on or trying out for any school athletic team or squad with a predetermined roster to have a physical examination signed by an approved health care provider attesting that such student has been examined within the preceding 12 months and found to be physically fit for athletic completion.

For additional information please contact Vanessa Wigand, Coordinator of Health Education, Physical Education and Driver Education by email at Vanessa.Wigand@doe.virginia.gov, or by phone at (804) 225-3300, or Jo Ann Burkholder, Director of Student Services, by email at Joann.Burkholder@doe.virginia.gov, or by phone at (804) 225-2818.

SRS/JAB/VW/rt

