

## **An Act Relative to Developing Self-Control on Sports Teams**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1. The Department of Mental Health in conjunction with the Department of Education shall establish a pilot program, subject to appropriation, for the purpose of creating and evaluating a science based curriculum and training program for school and organized youth sports teams. The goal of the pilot program is to have children practice the mental skills associated with self-control in an effort to reduce violence, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, bullying and other destructive choices commonly made by youth.
2. There shall be an advisory committee established to assist in the creation and implementation of the pilot program. This advisory committee shall consist of 9 members. One member shall be an expert in the field of sports psychology, one member shall have experience in coaching and administering youth sports, one member shall be from the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association (MIAA), one member shall be from a recreational organized youth sports league, one member shall be a licensed practitioner in cognitive-behavioral psychology, one member shall be a health psychologist, one member shall be a physical educator, one member shall be a health educator, and one member who shall be a licensed child psychologist. At least one member of the advisory committee shall have experience in conducting and reviewing science based psychological research.
3. The advisory committee shall conduct a review of existing resources including, but not limited to, texts, programs, science based research, and curricula related to the goals of the pilot program. The advisory committee shall make specific recommendations on the elements that shall be included in a model curriculum and training program for interscholastic and youth athletics, and shall have final approval of the subsequently developed curriculum and training program.
4. The Department of Mental Health in cooperation with the Department of Education shall develop a curriculum and training program, subject to appropriation, for interscholastic and youth athletics which shall include, but not be limited to:
  - (a) A science-based, practical guide for athletic directors, youth sports administrators and their coaches that offers the mental skills and techniques found in sport and cognitive behavioral psychology that integrates the teaching of self-control and sportsmanship within the existing framework of coaching sports teams and conducting physical education classes, including methods for recognizing thought, categorizing and disputing perceptions and changing thought to alter feelings, behavior and performance;
  - (b) A straightforward, science-based text for middle and high school aged students that teaches and gives mental drills that has children practicing the mental skills involved in physical activity, such as, but not limited to, focus, changing thought, effort, creating a

positive environment for self and others, goal-setting, visualization, resiliency and task-orientation;

- (c) Programming to deliver workshops, lectures and informative meetings to engage students, parents, teachers and coaches in discussions about self-control and sportsmanship and its relevance to behavior on and off the playing field.

4. The Department of Mental Health in cooperation with the Department of Education shall conduct a short term and longitudinal study to assess the effectiveness of the approved pilot curriculum and program in achieving aims of program, including, but not limited to: 1) participants showing evidence that they have learned basic skills such as the ability to change thought as compared to control groups; (2) effectiveness in changing behavior in game and practice situations, as well as behavior in and out of school; (3) clearly stated rationale underlying the program and the program's content and processes are aligned with its goals; (4) the program's content takes into consideration the characteristics of the intended age, population and setting; (5) the program implementation process effectively engages teachers, coaches administrators and athletes; (6) the successful integration of the content into coaching. The Department will submit a report to the Joint Committee on Mental Health and the Joint Committee on Education within three years of the beginning of the pilot program.

5. The developed curriculum and related materials will be made available for voluntary use to all public schools and youth sports leagues within the Commonwealth.

6. The Department of Mental Health in cooperation with the Department of Education shall create a public information campaign, subject to appropriation, that will relay the specific mental skills required to maintain self-control and encourage their use in all aspects of life including, but not limited to sports teams, schools, the arts and all places where children congregate.