

Responses to the 2015-2016 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report  
***Head Injuries and Concussions: Are Our High Schools Keeping Our Children Safe?***  
San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) Response

**FINDINGS**

- F1. Neurocognitive baseline testing provides a record of cognitive functioning in student-athletes prior to their participation in sports. Re-testing the student after a suspected head injury is a valuable tool in helping medical professionals evaluate if a student has recovered.

**Response: Agree**

- F2. Marin County high schools are using baseline testing to varying degrees and are often not retesting.

**Response: Disagree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) has begun mandatory baseline testing and retesting. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, SRCS will be implementing a required athletic administrative system to track students' head injuries and retesting.**

- F3. The costs of neurocognitive testing for high school athletes is currently funded in various ways, including booster clubs and other outside sources.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools neurocognitive testing is being funded by both the school district and fundraising from our parent booster associations.**

- F4. Certified Athletic Trainers, as medically-trained individuals, provide a necessary resource for protecting the health and safety of student-athletes.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools has trained its coaches to take proper precautions in accordance with the CIF Return to Play Protocol. For example, under the supervision of the Athletic Director, the trainers keeps a file on every student sustaining a sports head injury, with the files from their medical doctor, and follows the CIF Return to Play Protocol.**

- F6. Student-athletes and their parents do not receive adequate education in recognizing concussion and the importance of prompt reporting of symptoms.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools provides information to students, parents, and athletes; please see Attachment #1. However, we recognize that additional education is prudent and are including more opportunities to highlight head injury information to families.**

- F7. Data regarding head injuries sustained by high school student-athletes in Marin County high schools is not currently being maintained in a central database.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: We currently collect this information by school site.**

**Additional Comments/Key Points related to F1 thru F7**

Clearly these findings show the commitment of the Marin County Civil Grand Jury to providing maximum safety for student-athletes. San Rafael City Schools primary concern for all students, in every one of our schools, is ensuring student safety and well-being. To this end, San Rafael City Schools supports these findings, and would like to provide the following additional comments for consideration:

- The San Rafael City Schools budget is governed by our elected Board of Education and resources are allocated based on specific local needs/priorities outlined in our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP);
- Some of the findings can be implemented in a cost effective and efficient manner such as collaborating with other districts, the county office of education, and community partners on head injury education;
- We are working with our parent leaders, coaches, and athletic staff to highlight the safety issues related to head injuries, as well as asking for support from our parent groups and booster organizations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. Each district should require mandatory annual neurocognitive testing of all high school athletes and mandatory re-testing post-injury.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments:** San Rafael City Schools will implemented a head injury tracking system with the start of the 2016-17 school year. We already have electronic head sensors in place in gear for many high school sports and are tracking student head contact during play. Currently, district resources support one full-time the Athletic Trainer in place (part-time at each high school). Additionally, at this time, this position is being supplemented by Booster Club support at San Rafael High School (SRHS) to allow SRHS an additional 20 hours. We are committed to collaborating with other community partners to provide a more robust Head Injury Prevention program to protect our SRCS athletes.

Additionally, in preparation for our upcoming SRCS sports orientation programs with students and parents, we will be implementing a video based introduction to the dangers of sports head injuries.

- R2. A certified athletic trainer should administer and interpret all tests.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments:** Currently, the Athletic Trainers administer and interpret the immediate test results. Then the Athletic Trainers document and report the head injury to student-athlete, parent, school counselor, and school nurse. The school counselor and school nurse track both the student's academic progress and medical doctor's report indicating when the student is cleared to return to sports.

- R3. A certified athletic trainer should attend high-risk high school sporting events.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: Our SRCS Athletic Trainers attend all high-risk school sporting events. Sometimes this is challenging when multiple sporting events occur at the same time.**

R4. Each district should add the cost of neurocognitive testing to its annual budget.

**Response: Disagree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools is looking at the cost of testing for the future and is exploring alternative funding methods.**

R5. Each district should hire a certified athletic trainer for each of its high schools.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools currently funds a part-time Certified Athletic Trainer (CAT) on staff at each high school. These hours are being supplemented when possible, by booster club support (20 additional hours at SRHS). With budget resources being very limited, resources may not be available to maintain these positions in the future.**

R6. Each district should adopt a protocol for reporting a head injury so that all relevant persons are informed of a student's head injury and can work together as a team to ensure full recovery in the classroom and on the field.

**Response: Agree/Disagree**

**Comments: San Rafael City School's protocol for head injury follows CIF Concussion Return to Play Protocols.**

R7. Each school should adopt Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn Protocols for all athletes.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: San Rafael City Schools follows the CIF Concussion Return to Play (RTP) Protocol that is in state law. In addition, the school Athletic Director is responsible to ensure that all of our coaches are following these procedures with**

**student-athletes.**

- R8. Mandatory concussion education for student-athletes such as the Barrow Brainbook, the HEADS UP concussion training or some other equivalent education should be adopted by each school district. No student-athlete should begin participation before completing this education.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: Prior to participation, San Rafael City Schools' students and families receive information about concussion education (please see Attachment #1).**

- R9. The Marin County Office of Education should collect head injury data and compile the data in a centralized database. Data should include date of injury, sport, type of injury, diagnosis, recovery information and other critical details. The data should be reported to MCAL and CIF for analysis and summary and the results published for the public annually while keeping all names of students confidential.

**Response: Agree**

**Comments: Collection by the Marin County Office of Education would be of great value for our high school district. There may be other options as well, such as the Marin County Public Health Department. The challenge is that this information also has to remain at the school site within a structured set of protocols and procedures for our SRCS staff/ team.**