

OFFICE OF SCHOOL SUPPORT AND IMPROVEMENT

July 2024

Re: Baseline Testing Information

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) implemented baseline concussion testing for student-athletes in 2012–2013. Baseline testing is an optional neuropsychological test designed to assist in determining whether an athlete is sufficiently recovered from a concussion to return to active participation. Baseline testing involves an athlete taking a test in various areas of cognitive performance prior to their initial participation in the MCPS athletics program, in order to establish a “baseline” of cognitive skills. If an athlete suffers a concussion, subsequent baseline tests may be administered and compared to the original test. Baseline testing provides a tool that can be used in conjunction with other tools or assessment techniques to determine when an athlete can safely return to play following a concussion.

MCPS utilizes a software tool called ImPACT (Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) in order to implement systemwide baseline concussion testing. ImPACT is a computerized exam utilized in many professional, collegiate, and high school sports programs across the country to diagnose and manage concussions. If an athlete is believed to have suffered a head injury during competition, ImPACT can potentially be used to help determine the severity of the injury and when the injury has fully healed.

The test is administered via a unique link sent to each individual student-athlete. This non-invasive test is set up in “video-game” type format and takes about 30 minutes to complete. The test tracks information such as memory, reaction time, speed, and concentration. It, however, is not an IQ test. Student-athletes are encouraged to complete a baseline test one time, prior to their initial participation in the MCPS interscholastic athletics program. A baseline test is valid for the duration of the athlete’s participation in the MCPS athletics program.

If a concussion is suspected, the student athlete will have the opportunity to retake the test at no charge. Please understand that it is not required that student-athletes take a second baseline test following a concussion, and that parents/guardians are not required to use baseline tests as a criteria to resume participation. However, the test data will potentially enable health professionals to determine when return-to-play is appropriate and safe for the injured athlete. Both the preseason and post-injury test data may be given to the health care provider of your choice. A healthcare professional is not required to use baseline testing results as a condition for a player returning to completion.

To emphasize, the ImPACT testing procedures are non-invasive, and they pose no risks to your child. MCPS is pleased to provide this service, free of charge, for student-athletes and

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parents/guardians. The test can provide an important tool for health care providers for managing concussions and preventing potential brain damage that can occur with multiple concussions. Please note that parent/guardian consent is required prior to baseline testing and is requested during the online registration process for athletics. If you have any further questions regarding this program, please feel free to contact your local school's athletics specialist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Sullivan", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jeffrey K. Sullivan, Ed.D.
Director, Systemwide Athletics

JKS:rtm

Enclosure

Copy to:

Mr. Monteleone

Ms. Green

Mr. Hendi

Ms. Rossiter