

**From:** Smith, Kevin  
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**Subject:** FW: 10/07/11 Education Round-Up

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FYI – have a great day!

Sincerely,

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**From:** Higgins, Deborah  
**Sent:** Friday, October 07, 2011 9:42 AM  
**Subject:** 10/07/11 Education Round-Up

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[What should — and shouldn't — be in Senate No Child Left Behind bill](#)

(Washington Post/The Answer Sheet Blog, Valerie Strauss © 10/07/2011 )

Have a lovely weekend! Please see the article below.

*Deborah*

**Friday**



**Tallahassee Democrat**

**Paul Fleming: Saving athletes is a good idea, good law**

**6:12 PM, Oct. 6, 2011**

Sen. Bill Montford wants the state of Florida to protect students from heat-related death by dictating how high-school football teams practice.

The Democrat from Tallahassee, previously superintendent of schools in Leon County, intends to file legislation that would mandate guidelines for high-school students practicing in the heat. Montford wants to head off any possibility of another student death.

"This is the right thing to do," Montford said.

In August, DJ Searcy, a football player from Fitzgerald, Ga., died from causes related to extreme heat at a football camp in North Florida

Montford doesn't want to wait for another death before doing something.

Leon County Schools have done something. For more than eight years, the district has had guidelines about student practice in the summer heat — not just for football players, but for band members and cross-country runners as well.

Ricky Bell, athletic director for the district, said the procedures are regularly updated. Practice in August before school starts has to end by 11 a.m. and can't start before

3:30 p.m. Water breaks are mandated every hour. Shaded cool-down and treatment areas are provided.

Another protection was added this year. On days when the heat index reaches 105 degrees, no practice is allowed until after 6 p.m.

Those Leon rules and others are all fantastic and effective.

Montford wants to extend such rules around the state and give them the force of law. The Florida High School Athletic Association has guidelines in place, but they're just that. They aren't required.

"We shouldn't wait until something happens," Montford said. "This is so important we can't take time studying."

Montford's old district is in the vanguard.

"We're the leader on this," Bell said. Other districts copy the Leon model. "I've sent our guidelines around the state for years."

Montford's office said New Jersey is the lone state to adopt guidelines to protect against heat-related deaths. Douglas J. Casa, COO of the Korey Stringer Institute, said heat-related deaths are entirely preventable with the right policies in place as well as plans for emergency action.

Earlier this year, Florida's Legislature failed to act on proposals to set concussion-safety and helmet standards for the state's high-school football players. Another version has been filed for the 2012 session. And now Montford's proposal will be in the mix, too.

No one wants a young person to die for football. No one favors concussions. But in a legislative session that will be dominated by budget woes and political battles over redistricting, in an election year and an environment redolent with the tea party version of libertarianism, Montford's proposal will swim upstream.

Montford acknowledged the public sentiment against more new laws, more government regulation (epitomized this year by Rep. Ritch Workman's repealer bill to excise from state law the job-killing proscription against dwarf tossing). But he remains steadfast.

"I think there's an urgency to address this," Montford said.

There have been 13 deaths from heat-related high-school activities in the last year, including two in Florida. It is urgent to prevent another. Leon's schools' practices show it can be done now.

There is nothing like the power of a good idea. It's stronger, even, than Florida state law. Leon's guidelines, and Montford's desire to protect young lives, are both such good ideas. The publicity Montford's bill will gain for this important, lifesaving policy is an even better idea than passing it as a law.

— Paul Flemming is the state editor for the Tallahassee Democrat and [floridacapitalnews.com](http://floridacapitalnews.com). Contact him at [pflemming@tallahassee.com](mailto:pflemming@tallahassee.com) or 850-671-6550.