An unofficial survey of 26 Ohio high schools by Kent State University student journalists revealed seven high schools without a specific concussion policy. Four of the 26 high schools surveyed did not respond to public records requests or follow up phone calls by the student journalists. One high school superintendent and one athletic director from another stated they had no knowledge of their school’s concussion policy.

Eleven of the 26 high schools had litigation advisory. Two high schools, Strongsville High School and Medina High School) were unsure about the litigation advisory. Also, five high schools of the survey did not require education for coaches in concussion injuries.

Richard Goodright, the superintendent of Washington High School in Massilon, replied, “no comment” when asked about the school’s concussion policy.
The student journalists sent out public records requests to these high schools. One public record they asked for “every record for the last academic year and the current academic year (with the student’s name redacted) documenting a concussion or suspected concussion of an athlete”.

Youngstown High School’s athletic director said the school district had not had a concussion injury for nine years.

When Superintendent Robert Rostan of Struthers High School was asked if concussions could be tracked in the school, he said, “I believe we do.” In regards to how the concussions were tracked, Smith also said “I just don’t pay as much attention.”

Five high schools out of the 26 the students spoke to could not track concussion injuries. Two of the 26 high schools were unsure if concussions were tracked at all.

The athletic trainer of Gahanna High School, Paul Miller, was curious as to why he was being questioned about the high school’s concussion policy. He said, “My big question is why (do you want to know about our policy) because I feel like I am on 60 minutes?” Miller also said that the school didn’t have electronic records to track concussions. He said, “We use good old fashion pen and paper.” Miller also added, “I may not know about a concussion for three days until a kid comes in and says something’s wrong.”

Medina High School’s Director of Student Services, Kristine Quallich said the school doesn’t “necessarily have a concussion policy.” The Supervisor of Athletics for Parma City School District, David Allenick, echoed Medina’s response by saying “I don’t know that they do any tracking of [concussion injuries].” In response to the public records request, Allenick said, “Again, I’m not sure if we have records like that. Let me put it like this: I’m not aware of any records kept like that.”

When the student journalists asked Allenick how to get in touch with the Superintendent of Normandy High School in Parma, Allenick said, “You know what? He’s a Superintendent of a large school district and I’m sure he has other things to do. I can guarantee he knows nothing about our concussion policy.”

There were 17 high schools that have specific concussion policies. Chillicothe High School (Chillicothe High School_Concussion Report hyperlink) involves not only the athlete and the coaches, but parents as well. The return to play policy, or RTP, for Chillicothe is clearly outlined for athletes suspected of having a concussion. Their policy states, “No athlete suspected of having a concussion should return to the same practice or contest even if symptoms resolve in 15 minutes.” The Chillicothe policy goes on to say, “No athlete should RTP the same day as the concussion” and the “athlete must go home with parent or guardian.”

Zanesville High School also includes coaches, parents and fellow teammates in recognizing the signs of a suspected concussion.

Zanesville (Zanesville Concussion Pre-Season Form.pdf) provided a concussion checklist, which includes symptoms like “pressure in head”, “don’t feel right” and irritability. This checklist has a place at the bottom for parents and student-athletes to sign and date. Zanesville also insures athletes in its policy that “it’s better to miss one game than the whole season” and “when in doubt, the athlete sits out.”

Lakewood and Strongsville high school athletic trainers keep track of concussions for games and practices. The athletic trainers at Strongsville high school have the records on file and they do IMPACT testing at the beginning of the season.
IMPACT testing is when athletes complete a series of tests before the season starts. This helps trainers know how student-athletes respond when the student does not have a concussion.

In the event that the student does get a concussion during the season, he or she can return to those tests to determine the severity of the injury.