

Sports Medicine Classes in Secondary Schools:

How does it work?

The introduction of Sports Medicine courses in secondary schools is a topic growing in popularity along with the widespread need to place Athletic Trainers in High Schools. These courses provide students with a solid foundation in Sports Medicine as well as equip them with the tools they need to be successful in whatever field of study they may choose.

At the state level in Arkansas, these courses fall under the Work Force Education Program and are considered Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses due to the nature of the hands on training students receive in class. It falls under the Medical Professions umbrella and is coded as “Therapeutic Services”. A CTE diploma endorsement will be allotted to any student who completes the program. According to the Workforce Education Department, a student must complete **Intro to Medical Professions**, and **Anatomy and Physiology** as well as 1 complete credit in the field of his or her choosing. Students only need to complete SM I and SM II to attain the status as a “completer”.

Because of its affiliation with Workforce Education, SM courses are eligible for Carl Perkins Grants which offset the cost of starting a learning lab with the most basic equipment necessary to effectively teach these courses. This Basic Equipment List will ensure that any school that chooses to implement these SM courses will be given the same funds for the same equipment. The school’s main expense will be for a part time or full time teacher, books, and tangible supplies that classes will use year after year such as tape, pre-wrap, gauze pads, etc.

The general outline for the program is in part modeled after Secondary School Programs from other states such as Texas, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Oklahoma. While all were slightly different in their set up, the information remains the same. SM I and II are both a ½ credit each, while SM III is a full credit. The following are brief descriptions of each course:

Sports Medicine I is designed to provide students with a general overview of sports medicine from the perspective of the healthcare community that includes injury prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, psychosocial, and administrative concerns. Students will gain an understanding of sports medicine and the role it plays in the athletic community. They will also have the opportunity to work with various professionals in the field.

Sports Medicine II provides students with an in depth view of the world of sports medicine from the perspective of the Certified Athletic Trainer in terms of interacting with the healthcare community in various areas such as emergency situations, physiology and biomechanics of injury, as well as injury prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and

pharmacology. Students will have the opportunity to work with Athletic Trainers in different settings as well as earn certifications in First Aid and CPR/AED.

Sports Medicine III This course provides students with a basic overview of musculoskeletal injury recognition and evaluation from head to toe. It is designed to introduce students to basic evaluation procedures and special tests for different types of injury. Successful completion of this course is highly recommended for anyone interested in applying to an accredited Athletic Training Program at the University level.

Each District has the freedom of choice as to whether or not they are going to implement the program. Additionally, as with any new program, the process for beginning the implementation varies from district to district. In Bentonville, an application process is required in which the program must go through several different groups of people for approval, the last of which is the School Board. These courses will fall under the Medical Professions course group. It has been recommended that SM I be taught in the morning with JV athletics in the fall, there by allowing current athletes a peek into something they would otherwise not have access to. SM II will be taught in the afternoon with Varsity athletics in the spring. SM III is year round and would ideally be scheduled during the afternoon athletic period. Each course has an observation requirement. SM I requires 20 observation hours to be obtained in a sports medicine setting, not limited solely to the athletic training facility. SM II requires 40 observation hours which can be balanced between the athletic training facility and another sports medicine related arena. SM III requires a minimum of 80 hours which are to be held under the direct supervision of a Certified Athletic Trainer.

The benefits are endless. **The community** benefits from having an abundance of it's youth looking into a medical field who will be happy to come "home" after college to work in the hospitals, offices or even schools because of the relationships that will be forged with local medical personnel while in this program. **The school district** benefits from having 90 plus students carrying first aid and CPR/AED certifications so that in the event of a catastrophe, more than 90 people can begin to treat those in need, as opposed to only the Athletic Trainer and 1 or 2 nurses on site, if any. **The Athletes** benefit by having more people ready and willing to help them when they are injured. More importantly, there are additional eyes and ears on the ground to help watch out for dangerous warning signs of head injury or heat illness that can easily go unnoticed simply because there are not enough Athletic Trainers to cover everything at one time. If the time comes when an athlete goes down with a catastrophic injury, fewer life saving minutes tick by before 911 can be called and emergency personnel arrive, because it would no longer be one man or woman alone caring for these athletes, but rather a team of individuals educated and ready to spring into action. **The student** benefits from having early knowledge about different programs in the field of Sports Medicine as well as the training and experience he or she will gain, thereby

making entrance into Universities with competitive accredited Athletic Training programs much easier. Without such early training or experience, they simply blend in with the rest of the applicants. This brings us back to the **community** again. With more students gaining an interest in the field, there are more students going into accredited programs and becoming Certified Athletic Trainers themselves, meaning more of them will be coming back “home” to serve his or her state, community, or our schools.

This is not just another program to give students something to do at school. It’s an opportunity to enrich our communities and increase the depth of education our students receive at the secondary level, thereby making them more marketable in the increasingly more competitive world of Sports Medicine.