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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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### **AB 1005 (Davies) - Drowning prevention: public schools: informational materials: swim lesson vouchers and swim lesson directory**

**Version:** July 17, 2025

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** August 18, 2025

**Policy Vote:** ED. 7 - 0, HEALTH 10 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill modifies the authorizations and requirements of drowning or injury prevention organizations that provide informational materials to local educational agencies (LEAs). The bill also establishes the Swim Lesson Voucher and Swim Lesson Directory Development Plan Partnership to develop guidelines for the establishment of a swim lesson voucher program and swim lesson directory in California.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**

- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) estimates General Fund costs of \$780,000 for fiscal year 2026-27, \$1.9 million for fiscal year 2027-2028, and \$2.3 million for fiscal year 2028-2029 to implement the bill's provisions. This estimate includes the cost for 4.0 positions to manage consultations with Partnership members, implement Partnership decisions, assist vendors, maintain a drowning prevention directory, and process invoices and contracts. This estimate also includes various costs that may result from the bill's IT requirements which can vary depending on the responsibility and eligibility-vetting requirements defined for individuals receiving vouchers.
- The California Department of Education (CDE) estimates one-time General Fund costs of \$300,000 over a three-year period to develop school-based water safety and drowning prevention education curriculum and resources and make them available on its website.
- The Department of Developmental Services indicates that any workload increases as a result of this bill would be minor and absorbable within existing resources.

**Background:** Existing law authorizes a local, state, or national drowning or injury prevention organization affiliated with one or more drowning prevention organizations to provide informational materials, in electronic or hardcopy form, to a public school regarding the following topics:

1. The role that water safety education courses and swimming lessons play in drowning prevention and saving lives;
2. Local water safety and swimming skills programs in the county and communities served by the school, including free or reduced-price programs, and how to access information about age-appropriate public or private water safety courses

and swimming skills programs that result in a certificate indicating successful completion; and

3. Contact information of the organization to receive further water safety education information.

Existing law prohibits the informational materials from being used to solicit funding or donations for the organization. Beginning with the 2024–25 school year, upon receipt of the informational materials, a public school shall provide the informational materials to parents, legal guardians, or caregivers of pupils at the time the pupil enrolls at the school and at the beginning of each school year. Existing law requires, upon request by a public school, a drowning or injury prevention organization to provide the informational materials in the three most commonly spoken languages associated with the population attending the school.

**Proposed Law:** This bill authorizes public schools, upon receipt of drowning prevention informational materials, to provide the materials to parents, legal guardians, or caregivers of students at the time the student enrolls in said public school and at the beginning of each school year. The bill also encourages public schools to provide these materials to parents, legal guardians, or caregivers of students during the first week of May in the year the informational materials were provided.

This bill encourages public schools to provide students with water safety informational materials through multiple means, including but not limited to school assemblies, class room instruction, or library programs. It requires the informational materials to meet the following criteria: age- and grade- appropriate; aligned with the information from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and information identified by the CDE, as specified; and provided for free by drowning prevention or children safety organizations.

This bill requires a drowning or injury prevention organization that provides information to a public school do the following:

1. Provide written evidence, in the form of a letter or document no longer than one page, to a school administrator, demonstrating that the informational materials provided by the drowning or injury prevention organization aligns with the drowning, drowning prevention, water safety, rescue, and swim skill lesson information found on the drowning prevention web page of the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and
2. Provide informational materials at no cost to the public school and allow the school to offer copies of the materials to pupils and parents, and determine how said materials are made available.

This bill specifies that a school administrator or school entity authorized by the school district that engages with a drowning or injury prevention organization shall not be responsible for confirming the drowning or injury prevention organization's compliance with the requirements.

This bill requires CDE, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health and the Department of Developmental Services, to gather and make available on its website, school-based water safety and drowning prevention educational resources and curriculum that are age appropriate to students of different grade levels and adaptable for public school use.

This bill establishes the Swim Lesson Voucher and Swim Lesson Directory Development Plan Partnership (Partnership) to increase water safety by offering vouchers for swim lessons at no cost to children under 18 years of age whose families have an income of no more than 250% of the federal poverty level; and make it easier for parents, caregivers, and guardians to access swim lessons for their children at all ages.

This bill requires the Partnership to develop guidelines for establishing a swim lesson voucher program and swim lesson directory in California, both of which may include initial pilot programs. It specifies that the Partnership shall consist of no more than 10 members with representatives from the following entities: California's local parks and recreation district leadership with experience in water safety or drowning prevention, as identified by the California Association of Recreation and Park Districts and appointed by the Governor; state agencies with experience in water safety or drowning prevention, as appointed by the Governor; and up to four experts in drowning prevention identified by the Drowning Prevention Foundation and appointed by the Governor.

This bill requires the Partnership to do the following:

1. Develop model written agreements to establish a network of public and private swim lesson programs and swim lesson vendors that accept vouchers in exchange for providing swim lessons.
2. Verify that public and private swim lesson programs and swim lesson vendors have adequate and appropriately trained instructors to provide swim lessons for a voucher recipient.
3. Establish a model application method and eligibility criteria for swim lesson vouchers.
4. Issue swim lesson vouchers for eligible children.
5. Adopt guidelines necessary to administer the swim lesson voucher program.
6. Develop a free and publicly accessible online statewide directory of swim lesson programs, as specified.
7. Make recommendations and an action plan to seek various contributors to fund or match funds to cover the cost of the voucher programs and the development of the directory.

**Related Legislation:** AB 1445 (Arambula, Chapter 370, Statutes of 2023) authorizes a drowning or injury prevention organization to provide informational materials to a public

school, and authorizes, beginning with the 2024-25 school year and upon receipt of the materials, a public school to provide the materials to parents of pupils.

SB 855 (Newman, Chapter 817, Statutes of 2022) requires the California Department of Public Health to track and collect data on fatal and nonfatal childhood drownings, by January 1, 2024.

**Staff Comments:** According to the Department of Social Services, drowning is a leading cause of injury-related deaths among children under 5 in California. Drowning takes the lives of more California toddlers than any other kind of accident. Current law authorizes public schools to distribute informational materials, provided by a drowning or injury prevention organization, regarding water safety education courses and swim lessons. This bill establishes additional procedures for schools and the drowning or injury prevention organization to provide the informational materials. The bill also establishes the Partnership, which shall include members with experience in water safety or drowning prevention and experts in drowning prevention, to develop guidelines for a swim lesson voucher program and swim lesson directory. According to the author, "Drowning is completely preventable, but every year we have families across our State losing loved ones to unintentional drowning. With so many barriers to entry in swimming, it's hard for families to get the resources they need. By providing drowning prevention education in schools we can ensure that students and their families are receiving information from professionals on best practices. Also by developing a swim lesson voucher program we will eventually be able to ensure that any kid who wants to swim will be able to learn, and we can finally end drowning in California."

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