
CONSENT

Bill No: AB 1034
Author: Ávila Farías (D)
Amended: 4/21/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/18/25
AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Laird, Limón

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/23/25 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Teacher credentialing: programs of professional preparation: youth mental health

SOURCE: California Behavioral Health Association
Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, and Sonoma Counties

DIGEST: This bill requires that a program of professional preparation for a multiple or single subject teaching credential include, as part of health education requirements, experiences that address a basic understanding of youth mental health.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes minimum requirements for the preliminary multiple and single subject teaching credentials, including:
 - a) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
 - b) Completion of an accredited professional preparation program that includes:
 - i) Health education (e.g., nutrition, CPR, effects of substance abuse).

- ii) Field experience with pupils with exceptional needs.
 - iii) Use of advanced computer-based technology. (Education Code (EC) § 44259)
- 2) Requires teacher preparation programs to include a teaching performance assessment aligned with state-adopted standards. (EC § 44320.2)
 - 3) Requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to adopt suicide prevention policies and, by 2026, behavioral health referral protocols for students in grades 7–12. (EC §§ 215, 49428.1, 49482.2)
 - 4) Requires LEAs to certify that by July 1, 2029, all certificated staff and 40% of classified staff who interact with grades 7–12 students have received youth behavioral health training. (EC § 49428.2)
 - 5) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to identify and offer free youth behavioral health training programs to LEAs, including Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA). (EC §§ 216, 49428.15)
 - 6) Adopts the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP), which already embed numerous expectations related to youth mental health, trauma-informed practices, social-emotional learning, and restorative practices.

This bill:

- 1) Adds to the health education requirements in teacher preparation programs a requirement that candidates gain experience addressing a basic understanding of youth mental health.
- 2) States legislative intent to ensure all California teachers receive mental health training before entering the classroom.

Comments

- 1) *Need for this bill.* According to the author, “Suicide is a complex public health challenge which tragically, remains a leading cause of death for young adults. With our youth spending much of their days at school, signs and symptoms of mental illness can often present themselves in the classroom. Although our educators play a significant role in our children’s social, educational, and personal development, Youth Mental Health First Aid is not included in our state’s teacher credentialing process. AB 1034 sets our teachers up for success by requiring the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to develop a

standard and assessment so that beginning teachers have a basic understanding of youth mental health. This will help our educators to identify the signs, create a trusting dialogue and assist in getting the student the support they need.

“Telling the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn’t always obvious without having received proper training. This bill will ensure that from the moment they enter the field, every teacher can feel confident and prepared to help those students in need.”

- 2) *Expanding a Foundation That Already Exists.* This bill aims to ensure that all teacher candidates receive training that includes a basic understanding of youth mental health. While the goal is laudable and widely supported, it is worth noting that much of the intent is already embedded in current state policy. California’s 2024 revision of the CSTP includes explicit expectations that teachers recognize student mental health needs, implement trauma-informed and restorative practices, and access community-based resources to support student well-being. Additionally, the CTC’s program standards already require teacher preparation programs to address topics related to health, wellness, and emotional development. This bill could reinforce those priorities, but may have limited impact on actual practice unless it is accompanied by clarifying guidance from the CTC or future funding to support implementation.
- 3) *Meaningful Addition or Redundant Layer?* The policy question this bill raises is whether it meaningfully strengthens teacher preparation or simply restates expectations that programs already meet. While this bill would codify youth mental health as an explicit element of health education coursework, it does not require new coursework, standards revisions, or assessments. Moreover, recent state laws such as SB 153 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 38, Statutes of 2024) already require youth behavioral health training for all certificated staff who interact with grades 7–12 students, with implementation deadlines in 2029. In combination with free statewide access to YMHFA training and other CDE-approved programs, California already provides multiple avenues for educator training in this area. The author may wish to consider whether this bill closes a meaningful gap or risks layering statutory expectations without adding practical value.
- 4) *Schools as the Primary Youth Mental Health System.* There is strong evidence that schools are often the first—and sometimes only—point of contact for children and youth with mental health challenges. The American Institutes for Research estimates that up to 20% of children in the U.S. experience a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder each year, yet nearly half receive no mental

health services. For those who do, most receive services through school. Teachers are not clinicians, but they are uniquely positioned to observe patterns of behavior, identify signs of distress, and connect students to supports. Early identification and intervention can dramatically improve student outcomes, reduce chronic absenteeism, and mitigate downstream impacts such as substance use or disciplinary involvement. From a systems perspective, even modest improvements in a teacher's ability to recognize and respond to behavioral health concerns can have long-term benefits for students and schools alike.

- 5) *Balancing Training Mandates with Program Capacity.* Teacher preparation programs are already required to cover an expansive range of competencies, including literacy, technology, inclusive education, and trauma-informed practices. Layering additional statutory requirements, even well-intentioned ones, adds complexity to an already burdened system. To be effective, youth mental health training should be integrated into existing content in a way that supports coherence rather than dilution. The author may wish to encourage future monitoring or evaluation of how mental health training is being operationalized in teacher preparation, particularly to identify where support or technical assistance may be needed.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/30/25)

California Behavioral Health Association (co-source)
 Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties (co-source)
 Association of California School Administrators
 California School Nurses Organization
 California Youth Empowerment Network
 Los Angeles County Office of Education
 Los Angeles Unified School District
 Pacific Clinics
 PathPoint
 Public Health Advocates

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/30/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 5/23/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Bryan, Chen, Ellis, Nguyen, Sanchez, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Wicks

Prepared by: Ian Johnson / ED. / (916) 651-4105
7/2/25 16:25:01

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