

Date of Hearing:

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM
Christopher M. Ward, Chair
AB 1572 (Alanis) – As Introduced January 12, 2026

SUBJECT: California Interscholastic Federation: officials: registration, certification, and eligibility verification

SUMMARY: Requires the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to annually verify the eligibility of its officials to officiate CIF contests by requiring those officials to annually register through a platform.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires CIF to select a platform where its officials are able to annually register their eligibility to officiate CIF contests.
- 2) Requires the selected platform to consist of the following components:
 - a) A statewide and standardized background screening.
 - b) A record of rules tests, online training modules, sport-specific annual certifications, and continuing education requirements.
 - c) A record of liability insurance coverage.
- 3) Requires CIF, through its chosen platform, to annually verify that all components are completed before an official is deemed and marked as eligible to receive an assignment to officiate.
- 4) Requires CIF to provide access to the platform to participating member schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools, in order to verify the eligibility of an official. This access shall not include sensitive information in each individual component of the platform.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires CIF to report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature and the Governor on its evaluation and accountability activities on or before January 1, 2023, and on or before January 1 every seven years thereafter. The report is required to include, but not be limited to, the goals and objectives of CIF with regard to, and the status of, all of the following (Education Code (EDC) 33353):
 - a) The governing structure of CIF, and the effectiveness of that governance structure in providing leadership for interscholastic athletics in secondary schools.
 - b) Methods to facilitate communication with agencies, organizations, and public entities whose functions and interests interface with CIF.

- c) The quality of coaching and officiating, including, but not limited to, professional development for coaches and athletic administrators, and parent education programs.
 - d) Gender equity in interscholastic athletics, including, but not limited to, the number of male and female pupils participating in interscholastic athletics in secondary schools, and action taken by CIF in order to ensure compliance with Title IX of the federal Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681 et seq.).
 - e) Health and safety of pupils, coaches, officials, and spectators.
 - f) The economic viability of interscholastic athletics in secondary schools, including, but not limited to, the promotion and marketing of interscholastic athletics.
 - g) New and continuing programs available to pupil athletes.
 - h) Awareness and understanding of emerging issues related to interscholastic athletics in secondary schools.
- 2) States the intent of the Legislature that CIF accomplish all of the following (EDC 33353):
- a) During years in which CIF is not required to report to the Legislature and the Governor pursuant to paragraph (1), it shall hold a public comment period relating to that report at three regularly scheduled federation council meetings per year.
 - b) Annually allow public comment on the policies and practices of CIF at a regularly scheduled federation council meeting.
 - c) Require sections of CIF to allow public comment on the policies and practices of the CIF and its sections, and the report required pursuant to paragraph (1), at each regularly scheduled section meeting.
 - d) Engage in a comprehensive outreach effort to promote the public hearings described in subparagraphs (a) and (c).

FISCAL EFFECT: None. This measure is keyed nonfiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

- 1) Author's statement. According to the author, "AB 1572 is necessary to ensure that California's student athletes compete in safe, fair, and well-regulated environments. By establishing a consistent standard for CIF officials, we can give schools and parents confidence that officials assigned to games are qualified and accountable. This measure will also promote greater transparency and consistency across leagues, reducing uneven enforcement of rules. Ultimately, it strengthens the integrity of high school athletics and reinforces a commitment to protecting the well-being of every student athlete."
- 2) Background. CIF was organized at a high school athletic convention on March 28, 1914, as a voluntary association of schools. Since 1914, the California Department of Education (CDE) has allowed the CIF to regulate interscholastic athletics, and the CIF has been the rule-

making body for all of California's K-12 athletics programs since 1917. In 1981, that rule-making authority was expanded to include control over all interscholastic athletics, replacing the CDE in that role.

The Federation consists of ten regional sections, each of which is divided into several "leagues," for purposes of scheduling athletic contests, assigning referees, etc. Similar organizations exist in other states. Almost all public, private and parochial schools in California are CIF members.

The primary responsibilities of CIF are to administer high school athletic programs and to promulgate and enforce rules relating to a student's involvement in athletics - age, semesters in school, scholarship, residence, transfer status, and amateur standing. Such regulations, which are generated by the 1,628 member base of secondary schools, prevent undesirable exploitation of high school students, provide for the welfare of participants, and ensure that interscholastic athletics offer major benefits to students in a safe, rewarding environment.

- 2) CIF's Voluntary Background Checks. During the 2025-26 school year, a CIF-related officiating program offered optional background checks through a third-party vendor for referees. CIF primarily sets rules, certification standards, and eligibility requirements, but does not employ the referees directly. Officials are typically members of sport-specific local officiating associations. Those associations or assigning organizations handle training, certification, and sometimes screening requirements.
- 3) Arguments in support. According to the CIF – San Diego Section in support, “Since 1914, CIF has served as the grassroots organization tasked with ensuring consistency in the rules and policies for education-based interscholastic athletic programs in California. High school officials make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of young people every year, protecting the integrity of the games our kids love to play by demonstrating qualities like honesty, objectivity, consistency, courage, and common sense. They have the opportunity to help California’s student athletes learn life lessons and play an integral part in providing students with the opportunity to belong, connect, and compete in education-based athletics. This bill would require CIF to annually verify the eligibility of its officials to officiate CIF contests by requiring those officials to annually register through a platform selected by CIF for that purpose.”
- 4) Double-referral. Should the bill pass from this committee, it will be re-referred to the Assembly Committee on Education.
- 5) Policy considerations. There is currently no mandatory, standardized statewide process for verifying the eligibility of officials in CIF contests. This bill would create a uniform requirement for annual background checks, training certifications, and liability insurance verification for these officials. By adding consistency in officiating standards, this bill aims to mitigate potential risks to the safety and well-being of over 821,000 student-athletes participating in high school sports. By addressing this gap in oversight, CIF will be better equipped to prevent unqualified or unsuitable individuals from officiating or compromising student safety, add to the integrity of interscholastic athletics, and enhance public trust in education-based sports programs.

6) Prior and related legislation:

- a) AB 1665 (Pacheco) of 2026 would add student mental health training courses to the list of required training for CIF coaches. The bill is currently in the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism.
- b) AB 245 (McKinnor), Chapter 422, Statutes of 2023, requires coaches to complete training in CPR, recognizing the signs and symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, and how to use and automated external defibrillator (AED). It also requires emergency action plans and rehearsal of procedures to be followed in the event of a medical emergency related to athletic program activities.
- c) AB 1327 (Weber), Chapter 172, Statutes of 2023, requires CDE to develop a standardized incident form to track racial discrimination, harassment, or hazing that occurs at high school sporting games or sporting events.
- d) AB 465 (Bonilla), Chapter 146, Statutes of 2013, authorized community athletic programs to request state and federal level criminal offender record information and subsequent arrest notification.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

CIF – Central Coast Section
CIF – Central Section
CIF – Los Angeles City Section
CIF – North Coast Section
CIF – Northern Section
CIF – Oakland Section
CIF – Sac-Joaquin Section
CIF – San Diego Section
CIF – San Francisco City Section
CIF – Southern Section

Opposition

None on file.

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