

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 1626 (Gabriel, et al.)

As Amended August 21, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

AB 1626 establishes training content areas related to behavioral and mental health challenges specific to pupil athletes, to be used as for training for coaches of interscholastic athletic programs, non-interscholastic athletic programs, and youth sports organizations. This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), by September 1, 2027, to identify an existing training or develop a model youth athletics behavioral and mental health training, as specified, for coaches in youth sports organizations.

Senate Amendments

Senate amendments added contingent enactment language with AB 1665 (Pacheco), of the current legislative session, and corrected a drafting error by removing a duplicative reference to training topics related to the awareness of behavioral and mental health challenges specific to pupil athletes.

COMMENTS

Background. California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) was organized at a high school athletic convention on March 28, 1914, as a voluntary association of schools. Since 1914, 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.

1998 California High School Coaching Education and Training Program. Currently, CIF offers training programs to high school coaches who receive a certificate upon course completion. The completed certificate is transferable between school districts. CIF's mandated coaches training program, under the High School Coaching Education and Training Program (HSCTP), currently includes instruction on CPR, first aid, concussions and heat illness. CIF offers a free online concussion and heat illness training course for coaches where they receive an immediate printed certification upon completion. There is also a free online course for sudden cardiac arrest.

Currently, coaches must complete a CPR/First Aid/Concussion/Heat Illness course and renew that training every two years. Because this bill includes training on cardiac arrest as part of the

mandatory training requirement, coaches will be required to receive updated cardiac arrest training every two years as well.

CIF Bylaw 22.B. (9) states: "Definition of a coach, paid or unpaid: Any individual that the school/district is required to approve under Title V, California Code of Regulations, Section 5593 and 5594 and/or under California Education Code 33190-33192, 45125.01 and 45125.1." Simply stated, the law applies to anyone who is required to be fingerprinted and/or is approved by their local school board/directors to have contact with students. This applies to all CIF member schools, public and private.

According to the Author

"Coaches are uniquely positioned to make a real difference in the lives of young people. They see our kids every day - under pressure, in moments of failure, and in moments of triumph. AB 1626 gives coaches the practical tools they need to recognize when a young athlete is struggling and to connect them with the help they deserve. This bill is about creating safer, more supportive environments for every student or child who steps onto a field or a court."

Arguments in Support

According to a coalition of youth-centered, education, and behavioral health advocates, including Mental Health America of California, Equality California, and Disability Rights California, in support, "Coaches spend significant time with student athletes and are often present during moments of stress, failure, and vulnerability. This proximity places them in a unique position to notice early warning signs of mental health distress. Yet studies show that only one in five coaches feel highly confident in their ability to support youth facing mental health challenges, and California law currently does not require mental health training for youth sports coaches.

"By requiring mental health-informed training for coaches, AB 1626 would equip them to recognize signs of distress, engage in supportive communication, and connect students to appropriate school and community resources. This training would help reduce stigma, encourage early intervention, and foster safer, more supportive athletic environments for all student athletes."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, this bill will create a minor and absorbable cost to CDE. The bill passed on consent from the Senate Committee Appropriations pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8.

VOTES:

ASM ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM: 8-0-1

YES: Ward, Lackey, Elhawary, Jeff Gonzalez, McKinnor, Ortega, Valencia, Zbur

ABS, ABST OR NV: Quirk-Silva

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

YES: Patel, Hoover, Alvarez, Bonta, Castillo, Garcia, Lowenthal, Pellerin, Zbur

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0-3

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Flora, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 37-0-3

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarado-Gil, Richardson, Rubio

UPDATED

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