

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1653 (Lackey)

As Amended March 23, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC), the next time the health curriculum framework is revised, to consider including specified content related to preventing, recognizing, and responding to the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

Major Provisions

- 1) Requires the IQC, during the next revision of the health curriculum framework, to consider including, and recommending for adoption by the State Board of Education (SBE), specific content related to preventing, recognizing, and responding to the signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- 2) Requires the IQC to consider relevant heat illness prevention measures, heat illness signs and symptoms, and heat illness responses, as addressed by guidance issued by the State Department of Public Health (CDPH) and policies adopted by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF).
- 3) States that the signs and symptoms of heat illness include, but are not necessarily limited to:
 - a) A red or flushed face;
 - b) Nausea;
 - c) Muscle cramps;
 - d) Headache;
 - e) Dizziness;
 - f) Fatigue or weakness;
 - g) Confusion; and
 - h) Heavy sweating or the lack of sweating.
- 4) States that "responding to signs and symptoms of heat illness" includes, but is not necessarily limited to:
 - a) Stopping physical activity;
 - b) Seeking shade or a cool area;
 - c) Drinking water or otherwise hydrating;
 - d) Cooling the body; and

- e) Notifying a teacher, staff member, or other responsible adult.

COMMENTS

Heat illness in the health content standards and curriculum framework. The current health education standards, adopted by the SBE in 2008, for grades 6-8, include a standard on identifying ways to reduce exposure to the sun. The current health curriculum framework, adopted by the SBE in 2019, includes minimal content related to heat illness. In the grades 7-8 section the framework mentions sun safety as a health-management strategy.

Heat illness on the rise among children. A recent study published in American Pediatrics (Merritt, 2025) of heat-related illness trends found that as extreme summer temperatures become more frequent due to a changing climate, there is an increased risk of heat-related morbidity and mortality, particularly in vulnerable populations such as children.

Curriculum development and adoption process under review. The 2025-26 budget, through AB 121 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 8, Statutes of 2025, included \$1 million for a study on the processes by which other states develop curriculum guidance, and to make recommendations about how to improve and streamline California's processes. This report is to be completed by January 1, 2027. The report is required to include, among other topics:

- 1) The roles and responsibilities of the California Department of Education (CDE), the IQC, the SBE, the Legislature, local educational agencies (LEAs), educators, parents and guardians, and the public; and
- 2) The processes and cycles for developing, revising, and adopting content standards, curriculum frameworks, and other instructional guidance, and how available instructional time in elementary and secondary schools is considered.

According to the Author

"As temperatures continue to rise across our state and nation, protecting the health and safety of our students must remain a top priority. Extreme heat is no longer a rare occurrence, it is a growing public health concern. Our children are especially vulnerable. Student athletes practicing outdoors, children waiting at bus stops, and students in classrooms without adequate cooling systems are all at risk. Yet heat illness is preventable when individuals understand the warning signs and know how to respond.

Education saves lives. By incorporating age-appropriate heat safety lessons into health education curriculum, we empower students with practical knowledge they can use immediately at school, at home, and in their communities. This bill is not about adding burden, it is about prevention. A few minutes of education can prevent emergency room visits, long-term health complications, and even fatalities. Heat illness is predictable. It is preventable. And with this legislation, it is teachable."

Arguments in Support

The California School Nurses Organization (CSNO) writes, "Children are particularly vulnerable to heat-related illnesses due to their developing bodies, higher metabolic rates, and reliance on adults to monitor and regulate their activities. Conditions such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke

can escalate quickly, often beginning with subtle symptoms such as dizziness, excessive sweating, or fatigue, and progressing to confusion, nausea, or loss of consciousness. Prompt recognition and intervention are essential to preventing serious medical emergencies. CSNO believes all students should have the tools and education necessary to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat illness.

At CSNO, we recognize that awareness is the best form of defense when it comes to protecting both students and staff from the dangers of heat-related illness. AB 1653 strikes the appropriate balance of drawing attention to an important issue without putting undue burden on our schools."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, no new state costs.

VOTES

ASM EDUCATION: 8-0-0

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

UPDATED

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