

Date of Hearing: March 25, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Darshana R. Patel, Chair
AB 1665(Pacheco) – As Amended March 18, 2026

[Note: This bill was double referred from the Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports & Tourism Committee and was heard by that Committee as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: School athletics: coaches: pupil mental health training

SUMMARY: Requires coaches in elementary schools, middle schools and interscholastic sports, in both public and private schools, to complete a training in student mental health every two years. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires, commencing with the 2027–28 school year, a school district, county office of education, or charter school that elects to offer an athletic program, other than an interscholastic athletic program, to ensure that the athletic program’s coaches complete an initial training, and a subsequent training every two years, that covers both of the following areas:
 - a) Sudden cardiac arrest; and
 - b) Pupil mental health.
- 2) Requires, commencing with the 2027–28 school year, a person who serves as a coach in an athletic program at a public or private school, other than an interscholastic athletic program, that the governing board or body that maintains the school elects to offer shall be required to complete an initial training, and a subsequent training every two years, in a pupil mental health coaching education and training program that is approved by the California Department of Education (CDE).
- 3) Requires the High School Coaches Training Program to include training on pupil mental health and an age-appropriate focus on wellness, including physical and psychological wellness, indicators, causes, strategies, and helpful resources, by July 1, 2027. Authorizes this training to be provided by entities offering free, online, or other types of training courses.
- 4) Requires, commencing with the 2027–28 school year, a person who serves as a coach in an interscholastic athletic program at a high school that is a member of the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to annually complete, before the start of the season for the high school sport in which they are authorized to coach, a pupil mental health coaching education and training program that is approved by the CDE and meets the specified components.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program and states it is the intent of the Legislature that the program be administered by school districts, be updated and rehearsed annually, and emphasize the following components:

- a) Development of coaching philosophies consistent with school, school district, and governing board of a school district goals;
 - b) Sport psychology: emphasizing communication, reinforcement of the efforts of pupils, effective delivery of coaching regarding technique, and motivation of the pupil athlete;
 - c) Sport pedagogy: how pupil athletes learn, and how to teach sport skills;
 - d) Sport physiology: principles of training, fitness for sport, development of a training program, nutrition for athletes, and the harmful effects associated with the use of steroids and performance-enhancing dietary supplements by adolescents;
 - e) Sport management: team management, risk management, and working within the context of an entire school program;
 - f) Training: certification in CPR, use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), and first aid that includes, but is not limited to, training in recognizing the signs and symptoms of, and responding to, concussions, heat illness, and cardiac arrest. Concussion, heat illness, and cardiac arrest training may be provided by entities offering free, online, or other types of training courses;
 - g) Knowledge of, and adherence to, statewide rules and regulations, as well as school regulations, including, but not necessarily limited to, eligibility, gender equity, and discrimination; and
 - h) Sound planning and goal setting. (Education Code (EC) 35179.1)
- 2) Requires the 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. Requires the report to include, but not be limited to, the goals and objectives of the CIF with regard to, and the status of, all of the following:
 - a) The governing structure of the 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 the 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 the 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; and
 - h) Awareness and understanding of emerging issues related to interscholastic athletics in secondary schools.
- 3) Establishes the Eric Paredes Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act, which requires a coach of an athletic activity to complete a specified sudden cardiac arrest training course every two years. Defines athletic activity to include interscholastic athletics and an athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by a public or private school, including cheerleading and club-sponsored sports activities. (Education Code 33479-33479.6)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “Nearly 30 percent of teenagers face “serious psychological distress” – a percentage that has risen in recent decades. With half of all serious mental health disorders emerging during teenage years, we must meet students where they are. For more than fifty percent of California’s adolescents, that place is the playing field. While sports are meant to be a fun physical and mental outlet, student athletes face intense pressure to perform. At a time already defined by emotional and social turmoil, student-athlete physical and mental health must be supported in the most holistic way possible.

As trusted individuals in students’ lives, coaches have the unique opportunity to spot mental health crises and provide support to struggling student athletes. AB 1665 requires high school coaches to complete a mental health training approved by the California Department of Education. This bill equips coaches – who see and interact closely with student athletes every day – with necessary training to support student-athlete mental health, ensuring that the mentors closest to our students are prepared to provide knowledgeable and potentially life-saving aid.”

What does this bill do? This bill requires coaches in elementary, middle and interscholastic sports at private and public schools to complete training on student mental health, particularly around identifying early warning signs of mental health issues so that student athletes can be referred to the appropriate professionals. For interscholastic sports (high school), this bill adds this training to the existing High School Coaches Training Program.

High school coaches training. 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 Coaches Training Program (HSCTP) currently includes instruction on CPR, First Aid, concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat illness, among other topics. Currently, coaches must complete a CPR/First Aid/Concussion course and renew that training every two years. This applies to all CIF member schools, public and private.

CIF offers a free online concussion training course for coaches where they receive an immediate printed certification upon completion. The free CIF online training course in heat illness prevention includes sections that explore the principles of Heat Illness Awareness, Adequate Hydration, Gradual Acclimatization, Hydration Status Record Keeping, and offers Additional Prevention Measures.

What training is currently required for elementary and middle school coaches? Currently, the only training required specifically for elementary and middle school coaches pertains to sudden cardiac arrest, as established by the Eric Paredes Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act, which requires this training every two years for all coaches at public and private schools. If a coach is employed by a public school, they are also required to receive mandated reporter training, and other trainings required by their local educational agency.

Arguments in support. The California Hospital Association states, “Every day, California hospitals see firsthand the growing number of young people in mental health crisis. Since adolescents spend much of their time with peers at school and in extracurricular activities such as sports, it is critical that adults in those environments be prepared to support young people who are struggling. That’s why the California Hospital Association (CHA), on behalf of nearly 400 hospitals and health systems, supports Assembly Bill (AB) 1665, which would ensure high school coaches have appropriate training to provide informed mental health support to student-athletes. Today, 3 in 10 teenagers are facing “serious psychological distress,” and a growing number of adolescents are being seen in hospital emergency departments due to suspected suicide attempts. And while sports provide an important and effective physical outlet for the more than half of adolescents who participate, many teens face pressure to perform at increasingly higher levels. Although high school coaches are required to complete training on concussions, cardiac arrest, and heat acclimatization, they are not currently required to receive training on students’ mental health.”

Arguments in opposition. The California Family Council states, “Our concern with this bill is not its stated goal of supporting student mental health. The well-being of young people, including student-athletes, is vitally important, and coaches can play a meaningful role in recognizing when students may need support. However, AB 1665 creates a mandatory training requirement for high school coaches without providing clarity about what that training will include. These concerns are heightened given the direction of recent policies from both the Legislature and CIF. In recent years, CIF has adopted policies allowing male athletes who identify as female to compete in girls’ sports and access girls’ locker rooms and restrooms. Many Californians are concerned that vague mandates such as those in AB 1665 could be used to advance ideological training requirements that demand automatic affirmation of a student’s gender identity without regard to a coach’s religious beliefs or the beliefs or wishes of the student’s parents.”

Committee amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended to:

- 1) Require coaches to complete training in student mental health every two years with training topics consistent with Sections 35179.87 and 35179.85 in AB 1626 (Gabriel) and delete the requirement that the training be approved by the CDE.
- 2) Remove the requirement for coaches at private elementary and middle schools to be trained in pupil mental health.

Related legislation. AB 245 (McKinnor), Chapter 422, Statutes of 2023, requires the High School Coaching Education and Training Program to include training in recognizing the signs and symptoms of cardiac arrest.

AB 1653 (Sanchez), Chapter 589, Statutes of 2023, requires the California Interscholastic Foundation (CIF), in consultation with the California Department of Education (CDE), to develop guidelines, procedures and safety standards for monitoring the safety of practice and play when wet bulb globe thermometer (WBGT) readings reach specified levels, no later than July 1, 2024; and requires the governing board of the school district or the governing body of the charter school to ensure that there is a written emergency action plan in place that describes the location and procedures to be followed in the event of heat illness related to the athletic program's activities or events.

AB 1327 (Weber), Chapter 366, Statutes of 2023, requires CIF to report to the Legislature annually; requires the CIF report to include instances of hate violence; and, requires CIF to develop, in consultation with community organizations that represent the interests of ethnic groups and communities of color, a standardized incident form to track hate violence that occurs at high school sporting games or sporting events, and annually post those results on their website.

AB 2800 (Chu), Chapter 21, Statutes of 2021, adds basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of, and appropriate responses to, heat illness, to the training component of the 1998 HSCTP.

AB 2009 (Maienschein), Chapter 646, Statutes of 2018, requires, commencing July 1, 2019 that any school district or charter school which offers any interscholastic athletic program, must ensure that there is an emergency action plan in place that describes the location and procedures to be followed in the event of sudden cardiac arrest or other medical emergencies related to the athletic program's activities or events, and acquire at least one AED for each school within the school district or the charter school, for the purpose of rendering emergency care or treatment, as specified. The bill would also expressly state that an employee is not liable for civil damages resulting from the rendering of emergency care or treatment pursuant to the bill's provisions, except as provided, nor a public school, school district, or charter school, except as provided.

AB 141 (Hayashi), Chapter 173, Statutes of 2012, adds requirements to the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program (HSCTP) for training on understanding the signs and symptoms of concussions and the appropriate response to concussions.

AB 1646 (Hayashi) of the 2009-10 Session would have required training for coaches to be able to identify symptoms of head and neck injury. The additional training would have been incorporated into coaches' first aid certification renewal. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1893 (Hayashi) of the 2009-10 Session would have required all high school spirit activities (HSSA) coaches to have valid certification in CPR and first aid, including an understanding of signs, symptoms, and appropriate emergency action steps regarding potentially catastrophic injury, including but not limited to, head and neck injury and concussion. Pupils participating in HSSA who experience or show signs of trauma or other injury would have needed to obtain a release from the treating provider before resuming spirit activities. This bill was held in the Assembly Education Committee.

AB 533 (Hayashi) of the 2009-10 Session would have required training for coaches to be able to identify symptoms of head and neck injury. The training would have been incorporated into coaches' first aid certification renewal. This bill was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2741 (Miller) Chapter 744, Statutes of 1998, establishes the 1998 California High School Coaching and Education Program to be administered by school districts and to emphasize, among other things, sport psychology, sport pedagogy, sport physiology, CPR, and first aid.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Association of School Police Chiefs
California Coalition of School Safety Professionals
California Hospital Association
Los Angeles School Police Management Association
Los Angeles School Police Officers Association
Riverside Police Officers Association
Riverside Sheriffs' Association

Opposition

California Family Council
Cause: Californians United for Sex-based Evidence in Policy and Law
Women are Real

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