

ASSEMBLY THIRD READING

AB 1665 (Pacheco, et al.)

As Amended April 6, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

This bill requires a California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) high school athletic program coach to complete an initial training, and every two years thereafter, before the start of the season for the sport they coach, a mental health coaching education and training program. The bill also requires any local educational agency (LEA) that chooses to offer a non-interscholastic athletic program to ensure that an athletic program's coach complete an initial training, and every two years thereafter, covering sudden cardiac arrest and youth athletics behavioral and mental health.

Major Provisions

- 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) Youth athletics behavioral and mental health.
- 2) Requires the 1998 California High School Coaching Education and Training Program to include age-appropriate training on pupil mental health, by July 1, 2027. The focus of this training will be on wellness, including physical and psychological wellness, indicators, causes, strategies, and helpful resources. The bill authorizes this training to be provided by entities offering free, online, or other types of training courses.
- 3) 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 CIF to complete initial training, and subsequent training every two years, before the start of the season for the high school sport in which they are authorized to coach, a coaching education and training program on mental health.

COMMENTS

Background. The CIF governs competitive athletics in California for grades nine through 12. The CIF is organized under California Department of Education (CDE) and is governed by a council consisting of high school superintendents, principals, athletic directors, educators, and other organizations. Amongst other duties, the CIF adopts rules and regulations for school athletics and enforces them. 1,600 schools are members of CIF, meaning the schools adhere to CIF rules and regulations. Over 760,000 student-athletes participate in athletics at CIF member schools annually. CIF views the development of guidelines such as those required in this bill as part of its core mission.

With the exception of some one-time funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CIF receives no state funding. The CIF is funded primarily from (a) membership fees from member schools

(\$0.88 per student), which likely come from member schools' Proposition 98 General Fund general purpose funding, (b) corporate sponsorships, and (c) CIF event ticket sales.

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 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 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

"Nearly 30% 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 50% 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."

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."

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations, this bill will have minor and absorbable costs for LEAs choosing to offer a non-interscholastic athletic program to ensure that an athletic program's coach completes an initial and repeat training. The committee also noted that the bill allows that the training required may be provided by an entity offering free, online, or other types of training.

VOTES

ASM ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM: 9-0-0

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

ASM EDUCATION: 9-0-0

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

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 13-0-2

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

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Ta

UPDATED

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