
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1665 **Hearing Date:** June 10, 2026
Author: Pacheco, et al.
Version: April 6, 2026
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Michelle Nguyen

Subject: School athletics: coaches: youth athletics behavioral and mental health training.

SUMMARY

This bill, commencing with the 2027-28 school year, requires: (1) a coach for an interscholastic athletic program at a high school that is a member of the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to complete an initial training, and subsequent training every two years, on a coaching education and training program on mental health, as specified, and (2) that a local educational agency (LEA) ensure a coach of a non-interscholastic athletic program complete an initial training, and subsequent training every two years, covering sudden cardiac arrest and youth athletics behavioral and mental health, if the LEA chooses to offer a non-interscholastic athletic program.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Defines “interscholastic athletics” is defined as those policies, programs, and activities that are formulated or executed in conjunction with, or in contemplation of, athletic contests between two or more schools, either public or private. (Education Code (EC) § 35179)
- 2) Defines “athletic activity”, for purposes of the Eric Paredes Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act, as all of the following: a) interscholastic athletics, b) an athletic contest or competition, other than interscholastic athletics, that is sponsored by a school, including club-sponsored sports activities, c) noncompetitive cheerleading that is sponsored by a school, d) practices, interscholastic practices, and scrimmages for all of the aforementioned activities listed in this definition. (EC § 33479.1)
- 3) 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 cardiopulmonary resuscitation (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. Training on concussion, heat illness, and cardiac arrest 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.
 - h) Sound planning and goal setting. (EC § 35179.1)
- 4) Requires each high school coach to have completed a coaching education program developed by their school district or the CIF that meets the guidelines established by the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program. Requires that the coaching education program count toward the continuing education required for the renewal of the teaching credential of a coach who is also a certificated employee. (EC § 49032)
- 5) 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. (EC §§ 33479 and 33479.6)
- 6) 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, and shall 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 United States Code § 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. (EC § 33353)

ANALYSIS

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: a) sudden cardiac arrest as specified and b) youth athletics behavioral and mental health training as described by AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026).
- 2) 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 CIF complete an initial training before the start of the season for the high school sport they are authorized to coach, and subsequent training every two years, on a coaching education and training program on mental health as specified.
- 3) Adds, commencing July 1, 2027, that a mental health component, with age appropriate training that covers topics added by AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026) be emphasized in the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Research indicates that more than 20% of children confront mental health issues and that 3 out of every 10 teenagers face “serious psychological distress” – a figure that has increased in recent decades. About half of all serious mental health disorders develop during teenage years. During childhood years, more than half of kids participate in sports programs intended to be a fun physical and mental outlet, but many young athletes face increased pressure to perform at high levels. With this intense stress during an already tumultuous time, student-athlete physical and mental health should be supported in the most holistic way possible.

California has taken steps to address student mental health, including increasing student access to mental health services. However, even when resources are available, students are often most comfortable speaking with people they know. Coaches are often the first to hear about student-athlete mental health challenges. As trusted individuals in students’ lives, coaches have the unique opportunity to spot mental health crises and provide support to struggling student athletes.”

- 2) ***Slate of bills from 2025-26 Regular Session promoting wellness and improved mental health for pupil athletes.*** This bill, along with AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026) and AB 1985 (Irwin, 2026), recognizes the unique role that athletic coaches have in young athletes’ lives and aims to equip coaches with the tools and the understanding so that they can appropriately respond and provide support to young men and women during an age when this support is critical. This bill and AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026) address providing mental health training for athletic coaches in K-12 schools and youth organizations, while AB 1985 (Irwin, 2026) aims to provide mental health training for athletic coaches at the collegiate level.
- 3) ***CIF’s structure and role in interscholastic athletics.*** The CIF, founded in 1914, is a voluntary organization consisting of over 1,600 public, public charter, and private high schools and over 750,000 student-athletes, for the purpose of governing education-based athletics in grades 9 through 12. Almost all public and private high schools in California are CIF members. The CIF is organized under the California Department of Education (CDE), and CDE has allowed the CIF to regulate interscholastic athletics and be the rulemaking body for these programs.

The CIF consists of ten regional sections, each of which is divided into several local leagues, for purposes of developing sports, scheduling athletic contests, and assigning referees. Each league elects a representative to their respective CIF section’s governing body, which is called a Board of Managers or Council. Each CIF section’s governing body elects officers, establishes section policies, develops section playoff sports and schedules, and CIF members adhere to these rules and regulations adopted by their section.

Currently, CIF offers training programs to high school coaches who earn a certificate upon course completion that is transferable between school districts. These training programs are part of the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program and currently include instruction on CPR and first aid,

concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat illness. According to CIF's website, coaches who are part of CIF member schools must complete these training courses every two years.

- 4) ***Bill targets both interscholastic athletic programs and non-interscholastic athletic programs, and is closely related to AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026).*** This bill and AB 1626 are closely interlinked, and both require training for athletics coaches to promote awareness of, and strategies to address, behavioral and mental health challenges for pupil athletes. This bill specifically requires initial trainings, and subsequent trainings every two years, for coaches of non-interscholastic athletic programs operated by LEAs and for coaches in interscholastic athletic programs at high schools that are CIF members. This bill requires the trainings specified in this legislation to cover training topics established by AB 1626.

This bill doesn't define athletic programs that aren't interscholastic programs. However, non-interscholastic athletic programs could include athletic programs operated by LEAs that are not CIF members, or athletic programs for K-8 pupils operated by LEAs. These may include intramural sports, such as soccer and flag football at the high school level and track and field and wrestling at the middle school level.

- 5) ***Related and Prior Legislation.***

AB 1626 (Gabriel, 2026) would establish training content areas, related to behavioral and mental health challenges specific to pupil athletes, to be used for trainings for coaches of interscholastic athletic programs, non-interscholastic athletic programs, and youth sports organizations. This bill requires the 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.

AB 1985 (Irwin, 2026) would require, by July 1, 2028, the California State University, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and each private postsecondary educational institution and independent institution of higher education that receives state financial assistance, and requests of the University of California, to identify and compile a list of mental health programs that can be used to train athletic coaches.

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 concussions, heat illness, and cardiac arrest.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators
 California Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
 California Hospital Association
 California State Association of Psychiatrists
 County Behavioral Health Directors Association

OPPOSITION

None received

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