
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1985 (Irwin) - Student health: athletic coaches and trainers: mental health training

Version: June 18, 2026

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 3, 2026

Policy Vote: ED. 7 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill requires a coach of an athletic program at the California State University (CSU), the California Community Colleges (CCCs), and each private postsecondary educational institution and independent institution of higher education that receives state financial assistance, and requests of the University of California (UC), to complete a training on student mental health as a condition of the coach's employment or volunteer service.

Fiscal Impact:

- The Chancellor's Office estimates minor, ongoing Proposition 98 General Funds costs for community colleges to identify and provide the required training, with the understanding they would opt to offer an existing or free training that is available, or an existing training that may already be offered to mental health employees that satisfies the requirement. However, to the extent a community college decides to develop its own training, the Proposition 98 General Fund costs could range from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- The bill's costs for CSU and UC are expected to be minor and absorbable within existing resources.

Background: Existing law establishes the UC, CSU, and the CCCs as the three segments of public higher education and defines "independent institutions of higher education" as nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in California and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Existing law requires the governing board of each community college district, the Trustees of the CSU, the Board of Directors of the College of Law, San Francisco, and the Regents of the UC to, within existing resources, adopt and implement a rape and sexual assault education program for, and ensure maximum feasible participation of, students and student services professional staff members or student affairs professional staff members at each of their respective campuses or other facilities.

Proposed Law: This bill requires, by July 1, 2028, and every two years thereafter, for each campus of the CSU, CCC, and each private postsecondary educational institution and independent institution of higher education that receives state financial assistance,

and requests of the UC, a coach in an athletic program, including an assistant coach, to complete a training on student mental health, as specified, as a condition of the person's employment or volunteer service. The training shall cover at minimum, suicide prevention education and may also cover mental health first aid education. The bill specifies that the training may be provided by entities offering free, online, or other types of training courses.

Related 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 is pending on the Senate Floor.

AB 1665 (Pacheco, 2026) would require a coach for high school interscholastic athletic program that is a member of the California Interscholastic Federation to complete an initial training, and subsequent training every two years, on a coaching education and training program on mental health, and for that a local educational agencies to ensure a coach of a non-interscholastic athletic program completes a training covering sudden cardiac arrest and youth athletics behavioral and mental health if the LEA chooses to offer a non-interscholastic athletic program. This bill is pending on the Senate Floor.

Staff Comments: This bill aims to provide mental health training for athletic coaches at the collegiate level. According to the author, "There is currently no standard in state law that requires athletic coaches at college and universities to be trained on mental health awareness and best practices for their student-athletes. Without a state standard, individual institutions and campuses are left to create their own standards if they voluntarily train coaches on mental health. This leaves room for potentially no standard at all, inconsistent implementation if there is a policy, and generally a lack of oversight from the state to ensure coaches are receiving training on the most up-to-date and evidence-based best practices."

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