

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2651 (Bonta) – As Amended April 20, 2026

Policy Committee:	Health	Vote:	12 - 3
	Education		7 - 1

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to (1) determine and update the immunization rates necessary to prevent the spread of specified communicable diseases (herd immunity rates) and (2) establish notification procedures to annually inform the governing authority of each school when CDPH determines the school’s immunization rate falls below the herd immunity rate for a disease. This bill requires the governing authority of a public or private school to notify parents or guardians, within 10 days of receiving notice from CDPH, when immunization rates fall below safe levels, as established and communicated by CDPH.

FISCAL EFFECT:

General Fund costs to CDPH of an unknown amount, potentially \$150,000 per year, to establish and update herd immunity rates, identify for each specified disease schools whose vaccination rates fall below herd immunity rates, and provide notices to such schools.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office recently warned of General Fund structural deficits of around \$35 billion per year in the 2027-28 fiscal year and ongoing.

Costs of an unknown but likely absorbable amount to schools, as schools required to provide notice would need to do so no more than once per year, and most schools would likely not be required to provide notices.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Parents deserve to have easy access to the information that keeps their children safe. [This bill] requires the CDPH to notify parents when a school’s vaccination rate falls below herd immunity levels. By ensuring parents have this knowledge, this bill gives parents additional tools to make informed decisions about their children’s well-being. With this knowledge, parents are better equipped to care for their immunocompromised children and family members. Thirty-nine states saw kindergarten vaccination rates fall below the herd immunity threshold for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) in the 2023-24 school year. AB 2651 reinforces California’s commitment to giving

parents the resources they need to make educated decisions for their children's health, without changing current vaccination requirements.

- 2) **Background. *Vaccinations and herd immunity.*** The World Health Organization (WHO) describes herd immunity as follows:

'Herd immunity', also known as 'population immunity', is the indirect protection from an infectious disease that happens when a population is immune either through vaccination or immunity developed through previous infection. WHO supports achieving 'herd immunity' through vaccination, not by allowing a disease to spread through any segment of the population, as this would result in unnecessary cases and death.

State law requires children to be vaccinated against 10 diseases before attending school and childcare settings. Evidence of immunization is collected for all children when they first enter a school or childcare setting, and when they enter transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and seventh grade. Each of the 10 required immunizations was added to California code through legislative action.

Existing law requires childcare facilities and public and private schools to document vaccination status of all children attending childcare, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and seventh grade. This data is then reported annually to CDPH. CDPH is required to annually review these reports and investigate any facility that does not report or reports vaccination rates under 95%. Both CDPH and local health departments are required to monitor the immunization status of all children.

CDPH estimates that 1,000 students in the state have medical exemptions. These children are highly susceptible to contagious diseases, and even a mild illness can cause severe or fatal injury. Similarly, infants who have not yet received a vaccine are at greater risk of developing a severe disease if exposed to infectious agents. For these children, herd immunity amongst their peers provides critical protection, as it reduces the likelihood that they will be exposed to a potentially fatal illness.

Parents and guardians of these children may want to know if their school is below safe vaccination levels, so they can make informed decisions about their child's health.

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