
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 437
Author: Lackey (R)
Amended: 3/19/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 6/18/25
AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Laird, Limón

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 62-0, 3/28/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Interscholastic athletics: California Interscholastic Federation:
sports-related injuries

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to include in its septennial report to the Legislature and the Governor, information specific to sports-related head injuries and other sports-related injuries and medical problems.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that the CIF is a voluntary organization comprising of school and school-related personnel responsible for administering interscholastic athletic activities in secondary schools. (Education Code (EC) § 33353 (a))
- 2) Specifies the CIF shall report to the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature and the Governor on its evaluation and accountability activities undertaken on or before January 1, 2023, and on or before January 1 every seven years thereafter. This report shall include, but not be limited to, the goals and objectives of the CIF 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 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, spectators, including but not limited to, racial discrimination, harassment, or hazing.
 - 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 (b))
- 3) States, subject to funds being appropriated for this purpose in the annual Budget Act, the CIF is encouraged to establish a statewide panel that includes, at a minimum, the following members: school administrators, school board members, coaches of secondary school athletics, teachers, parents, athletic directors, representatives of higher education, pupils participating in athletics at the secondary school level, and a representative of the State Department of Education (CDE). (EC § 35179.2)
- 4) Requires a school district, charter school, or private school that elects to offer an athletic program to comply with all of the following:

- a) Immediately remove from the athletic activity for the remainder of the day an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury.
 - b) Prohibits the athlete from returning to the athletic activity until he or she is evaluated and provided written clearance by a licensed health care provider.
 - c) Requires the athlete, if the health care provider determines a concussion or head injury was sustained, to complete a graduated return-to-play protocol of at least seven days in duration.
 - d) Requires a concussion and head injury information sheet to be signed and returned by the athlete and the parent annually before the athlete initiates practice or competition. (EC § 49475(a)(1))
- 5) Requires a school district, charter school, or private school that elects to offer an athletics program to issue an annual concussion and head injury information sheet to be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian before the athlete initiates in practice or competition. (EC § 49475(a)(2))
- 6) Requires the CDE to make available specified guidelines and materials on sudden cardiac arrest; requires pupils and parents to sign informational materials before athletic participation; requires training of coaches; and sets requirements for action in the event a pupil experiences specified symptoms. (EC § 33479 et al.)

This bill requires the CIF to include in its septennial report to the Legislature on the health and safety of pupils, coaches, officials, and spectators, information about sports-related head injuries, including concussions, and other sports-related injuries and medical problems, requiring medical clearance to resume full athletic participation, including injuries sustained during competitions, practices, and training camps.

Comments

- 1) *Need for this bill.* According to the author, "AB 437 simply adds sports-related head injuries and other sports-related injuries and medical problems as reportable information for the California Interscholastic Federation."

- 2) *The California Interscholastic Federation.* The CIF, founded in 1914, is a voluntary organization comprised of 1,615 public, public charter, and private high schools that are organized into ten geographical sections for the purpose of governing education-based athletics in grades 9 through 12.

While each CIF section has autonomy from the state and has its own governance structure, section control and oversight are led by school representatives from that geographical region. These representatives include school board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, coaches, and athletic directors from each high school who come together to carry out the CIF's mission that is outlined in the CIF Constitution and Bylaws. The CIF Constitution and Bylaws are the product of the CIF elected representatives who serve on the CIF Federated Council and Executive Committee.

The elected membership of the Federated Council consists of school and district representatives elected from the 10 CIF Sections. State council membership voting is weighted to reflect the number of schools and students served by the respective CIF sections. Additionally, voting members of the Federate Council include representatives from the CDE; California School Boards Association; Association of California School Administrators; California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; California Coaches Association; California Athletic Directors Association; California Association of Private School Organizations; California Association of Directors of Activities; and school superintendents from across the state.

The CIF receives no state or federal funding as part of its annual budget and is supported by state championship game receipts (36%), corporate support and sponsorships (35%), and limited membership dues (18%). Local school programs are supported by their school district general fund, game receipts, and fundraising by coaches, student-athletes and booster clubs.

Current law requires CIF to submit a report to the Legislature and the Governor every seven years on its evaluation and accountability activities. This report includes information on CIF's governance structure; the quality of coaching and officiating; gender equity in interscholastic sports; the health and safety of its students; and the health and safety of students, coaches, officials, spectators (including information about racial discrimination, harassment, or hazing).

This bill adds to this report a requirement to include information about sports-related head injuries, including concussions and other sports-related injuries and

medical problems that require medical clearance to resume full athletic participation.

- 3) *CIF Bylaws on Sports Injuries*. As part of its adopted bylaws and state law, CIF currently has established injury protocols for concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat illness. In each of these protocols, if a student athlete exhibits the respective injury while participating in, or immediately following, an athletic activity or is known to have exhibited the respective injury while participating in, or immediately following an athletic activity, they must be removed immediately from participating in a practice or game for the remainder of the day. A student athlete who has been removed from play after displaying signs and symptoms associated with the respective injury may not return to play until they have been evaluated by a licensed health care provider and have received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.

Consistent with state law, CIF bylaws also require that information sheets on concussions, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat illness be issued annually to student athletes and their parents or guardians. These information sheets must be signed and returned by all student athletes and their parents or guardians before the student athlete's initial practice or competition.

Prior legislation

AB 245 (McKinnor, Chapter 422, Statutes of 2023), revises requirements established by the California High School Coaching Education and Training Program to include training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid. This includes additional training to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of concussions, heat illness, and cardiac arrest, certification in the use of an automated external defibrillator, and rehearsal of emergency action plan procedures to be followed during medical emergencies at athletic program activities or events.

AB 1327 (Weber, Chapter 366, Statutes of 2023) requires the CDE to develop a standardized incident form to track racial discrimination, harassment, or hazing that occurs at high school sporting games or sporting events, and requires each local educational agency that participates in the CIF to post on their internet website the standardized incident form developed by the CDE.

AB 1653 (Sanchez, Chapter 589, Statutes of 2023) requires a school district or charter school that elects to offer any interscholastic athletic program to include

as part of their emergency action plan, a procedure in the event a student athlete suffers from a heat stroke.

AB 1660 (Cooper, Chapter 122, Statutes of 2016) eliminated the sunset on provisions related to CIF, and instead requires legislative hearings every seven years to correspond with the release of specific reporting by the CIF.

AB 1639 (Maienschein, Chapter 792, Statutes of 2016) establishes a return-to-play protocol for students who pass out or faint during an athletic activity, requires coaches to complete a sudden cardiac arrest training course, and requires schools to retain a copy of a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet before a student participates in an athletic activity.

AB 25 (Hayashi, Chapter 456, Statutes of 2011) requires a school district that elects to offer athletic programs to immediately remove from a school-sponsored athletic activity for the remainder of the day an athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury during that activity. The bill also prohibits the return of the athlete to that activity until they are evaluated by, and receives written clearance from, a licensed health care provider.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/18/25)

California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/18/25)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 62-0, 3/28/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Berman, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Pellerin, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schultz, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Wicks, Wilson, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarez, Bennett, Boerner, Chen, Essayli, Flora,
Gabriel, Lee, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Rogers,
Schiavo, Sharp-Collins, Ward, Zbur

Prepared by: Therresa Austin / ED. / (916) 651-4105
6/27/25 11:08:42

**** **END** ****