

Date of Hearing:

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM

Christopher M. Ward, Chair

AB 437 (Lackey) – As Introduced February 6, 2025

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

**SUMMARY:** This bill would require the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to include in their state-mandated report to the Legislature and the Governor, information specific to sports-related head injuries and other sports-related injuries and medical problems.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Would adds to section 33353 (b)(1)(e) of the Education Code (EDC) that the CIF’s report to the Legislature and the Governor, which is due on or before January 1, 2023, and on or before January 1 every seven years thereafter, includes information specific to sports-related head injuries and other sports-related injuries and medical problems.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) The California Interscholastic Federation is a voluntary organization that consists of school and school-related personnel with responsibility for administering interscholastic athletic activities in secondary schools (EDC 33353 (a)).
- 2) Requires the CIF to 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. Requires this report to include, but not be limited to, the goals and objectives of the CIF with regard to, and the status of, all of the following (EDC 33353 (b)):
  - 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 U.S.C. Sec. 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.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** None. This measure has been keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) Author's Statement. 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) Background. The CIF was organized at a high school athletic convention on March 28, 1914, as a voluntary association of schools. Since 1914, the CDE has allowed the CIF to regulate interscholastic athletics, and the CIF has been the rule-making body for all of California's K-12 athletics programs since 1917. In 1981, that rule-making authority was expanded to include control over all interscholastic athletics, replacing the CDE in that role.

While each CIF section has autonomy from the state and have their own governance structure, section control and oversight is 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 is the product of the CIF elected representatives who serve on the CIF Federated Council and Executive Committee.

**California Interscholastic Federation**



The elected membership of the Federated Council consists of school and district representatives elected from the 10 CIF Sections (see graphic). 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 California Department of Education (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 Schools, California Association of Directors of Activities and California School Superintendents.

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.

The primary responsibilities of CIF are to administer high school athletic programs and to promulgate and enforce rules relating to a student's involvement in athletics - age, semesters in school, scholarship, residence, transfer status, and amateur standing. Such regulations, which are generated by the 1,615 member base of secondary schools, prevent undesirable exploitation of high school students, provide for the welfare of participants, and ensure that interscholastic athletics offer major benefits to students in a safe, rewarding environment. Almost all public, private and parochial schools in California are CIF members.

- 3) Policy Considerations. There are a few issues to consider as this bill moves forward. The main issue is how CIF obtains this information in order to include it in their report, as CIF and their member sections are not currently required to collect data on concussions.

The committee is suggesting amendments to the author that would clarify the types of injuries that CIF should report on, including concussions and other problems requiring medical clearance to resume full athletic participation, specific to injuries sustained during competitions, practices, and training camps.

- 4) Double-referral. This bill is not currently double-referred, but the Assembly Committee on Education has requested to hear this bill as well. Both committees have oversight jurisdiction on CIF.

- 5) Prior and related legislation:

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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, procedure in the event a student athlete suffers from a heat stroke.
- d) 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.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

There is no support on file.

**Opposition**

There is no opposition on file.

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