

Date of Hearing: April 5, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 643 (Frazier) – As Introduced February 14, 2017

**SUBJECT:** School curriculum: abusive relationships

**SUMMARY:** Requires that instruction on the early warning signs of domestic violence be included in mandated sexual health instruction. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Adds “recognizing the early warning signs of domestic violence in order to prevent abusive relationships” to the stated purposes of the California Healthy Youth Act.
- 2) Requires that instruction and materials used in mandated comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to recognize the early warning signs of domestic violence in order to prevent abusive relationships.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires, in the California Healthy Youth Act, each school district to ensure that all students in grades 7 to 12 receive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education from instructors trained in the appropriate courses. (EC 51934)
- 2) Requires each student to receive this instruction at least once in junior high school or middle school and at least once in high school.
- 3) Requires instruction and materials to provide pupils with knowledge and skills they need to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection, and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation.
- 4) Requires instruction and materials to include information about sexual harassment, sexual assault, adolescent relationship abuse, intimate partner violence, and sex trafficking.
- 5) Requires, when the Health curriculum framework is next revised after January 1, 2017, the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to consider including comprehensive information for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, on the development of healthy relationships, including:
  - a) understanding the principles of treating one another with respect, dignity, and kindness
  - b) demonstrating the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to address and resolve disagreement and conflict
  - c) recognizing when and how to respond to dangerous or other situations that may result in the bullying, harassment, harming, or hurting of another person

**FISCAL EFFECT:** The Office of Legislative Counsel has keyed this bill as a state mandated local program.

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Unhealthy and abusive relationships are often developed at an early age due to exposure to behavior inside and outside of the home and family. This bill seeks to provide students with the educational resources they need to recognize and prevent domestic violence wherever they encounter it.”

According to the author, research on the societal costs of domestic violence demonstrates that this instruction is needed. The author cites research showing that women victimized by the behaviors of a teen dating partner obtain less education compared to those who have not been victimized” (Adams, 2013), that being physically or sexually abused makes teen girls six times more likely to become pregnant (Decker, 2005), and that one quarter to one-half of domestic violence victims report that they lost a job, at least in part, due to domestic violence” (GAO, 1998).

***Current law already requires that schools teach about adolescent relationship abuse, intimate partner violence, healthy relationships free from violence.*** AB 329 (Weber), Chapter 398, Statutes of 2015 requires schools to provide comprehensive sexual health education twice in grades 7-12, including information about adolescent relationship abuse and intimate partner violence. It also requires that instruction and materials give students the knowledge to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection, and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation. This bill requires that instruction and materials used in this instruction provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to recognize the early warning signs of domestic violence.

All of the content mandated by AB 329 will be included in the revision of the Health curriculum framework. That framework is under revision now and scheduled for adoption by the State Board of Education in May, 2019. Instructional materials which are aligned to this framework will then be adopted by the State Board of Education. School districts generally purchase state-adopted instructional materials for classroom use.

Since the content identified in this bill (by more specific terms) is already to be included in the Health curriculum framework and corresponding instructional materials, and since other law requires that the IQC consider including content on healthy relationships when revising the Health curriculum framework, it is unclear if this bill will add significantly to the mandated instruction.

The one area of content not already included in the code is related to “early warning signs” of abuse. Accordingly, ***staff recommends that the bill be amended*** to strike the current language and instead add create a new line within Section 51934 which requires that instruction include “Information on adolescent relationship abuse and intimate partner violence, including the early warning signs of thereof.”

***Status of comprehensive sexual health mandate implementation.*** While the mandate to provide comprehensive sexual health education has been effective since January 1, 2016, instructional materials aligned to the content required by law will not be adopted until well after the Health Curriculum Framework is completed and adopted in May, 2019.

In the interim, schools are required by law to provide this instruction, and school districts may look to the CDE for guidance on how to meet the requirements of the law. The CDE website currently says only that new legislation has been enacted which will change sexual health education, that the law goes into effect January 1, 2016, and to check back for updates. Another page states that the content is under review.

At least one independent organization has developed curriculum materials and a compliance checklist to assist school districts in meeting the requirements of the law. However, as AB 329 included significant revisions to content and instruction, and as school districts look to the state for guidance, *the Committee may wish to consider* whether the state is providing sufficient information to school districts on the requirements of the law.

***Health curriculum framework under revision.*** The state's health framework was last revised in 2003. It does not reflect the state's health content standards, which were adopted in 2008. The CDE's website notes that the sections on family living are inconsistent with current law.

Work on revising of the health framework was initiated in 2008. In 2009 the state's fiscal emergency halted all work on instructional materials adoptions and framework revisions until the 2013-14 school year by AB 4 X2 (Evans) Chapter 2, Statutes of 2009. That suspension was later extended until the 2015-16 school year by SB 70 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 7, Statutes of 2011.

The Health curriculum framework revision is now underway, and final adoption by the SBE is scheduled for May, 2019. Four focus group meetings were held in the fall of 2016. The Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committees have been chosen, and will be holding meetings between May, 2017 and January, 2018.

The Budget Act of 2016 included \$362,000 in one-time funds for the revision of the Health framework, editorial charges associated with the development of the science framework, and the operational expenses of the IQC. The 2016 budget also included \$135,000 for the CDE to contract with a researcher/writer with expertise in sex trafficking and sexual abuse to draft a section of the health framework for consideration by the IQC. This appropriation is related to SB 1165 (Mitchell), Chapter 713, Statutes of 2014, which requires the IQC to consider including sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education in the health framework when it is next revised.

***Related and prior legislation.*** AB 1227 (Bonta) of this Session requires school districts to provide instruction on abuse, sexual abuse, and human trafficking. This bill is pending in this Committee.

SB 1435 (Jackson) Chapter 633, Statutes of 2016 requires, when the health curriculum framework is next revised after January 1, 2017, the IQC to consider including comprehensive information for kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, on the development of healthy relationships, as specified.

AB 329 (Weber), Chapter 398, Statutes of 2015 requires schools to provide comprehensive sexual health education in grades 7-12, and modified the content of instruction on sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention.

SB 1165 (Mitchell), Chapter 713, Statutes of 2014, requires the IQC to consider including sexual abuse and sex trafficking prevention education in the Health framework when it is next revised, and authorizes school districts to provide instruction on sexual abuse and sex trafficking.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs  
Association of Deputy District Attorneys  
California Association of Code Enforcement Officers  
California College and University Policy Chiefs Association  
California Narcotic Officers Association  
California Partnership to End Domestic Violence  
California School Nurses Organization  
City of Vacaville  
Crime Victims United of California  
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition  
Los Angeles County Professional Peace Officers Association  
Los Angeles Police Protective League  
Riverside Sheriffs' Association  
Safequest Solano  
Vacaville Unified School District  
Several individuals

**Opposition**

None on file

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