

Assembly Bill No. 689

CHAPTER 645

An act to add Section 51210.8 to the Education Code, relating to curriculum.

[Approved by Governor October 7, 2005. Filed with
Secretary of State October 7, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 689, Nava. Nutrition and physical activity curriculum.

Existing law requires the State Board of Education to adopt instructional materials in designated subject areas for use in kindergarten and grades 1 to 8, inclusive, and to ensure that curriculum frameworks are reviewed and adopted in each subject area consistent with the cycles for the submission of instructional materials. Existing law requires the State Department of Education to incorporate nutrition education curriculum content into the health curriculum framework at its next revision, with a focus on pupils' eating behaviors.

This bill would require the state board to adopt, on or before March 1, 2008, content standards in the curriculum area of health education. The bill would make that duty contingent upon the availability of funding.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Physical inactivity and a poor diet account for at least 300,000 deaths in the United States each year.

(b) According to a 2004 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths caused by physical inactivity and a poor diet increased by 33 percent over the past decade and may soon become the leading preventable cause of death.

(c) The National Center for Health Statistics reports that the percentage of young people who are overweight has doubled since 1980.

(d) Of children 5 to 10 years of age who are overweight, 61 percent have one or more cardiovascular disease factors and 27 percent have two or more.

(e) Over 25 percent of California's 5th, 7th, and 9th grade pupils are overweight, and close to 75 percent are physically unfit.

(f) According to the American School Food Service Association's study of the impact of hunger and malnutrition on pupil achievement, published in the School Board Food Service Research Review, among fourth grade

pupils, those having the lowest amount of protein in their diets had the lowest achievement scores.

(g) Iron deficiency anemia leads to shortened attention span, irritability, fatigue, and difficulty with concentration. Consequently, children who are anemic tend to do poorly on vocabulary, reading, and other tests, as explained in the Relationship Between Nutrition and Learning: A School Employee's Guide to Information and Action, published by the National Education Association.

(h) A study by the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy found that even moderate undernutrition, consisting of inadequate or suboptimal nutrient intake, can have lasting effects and can compromise cognitive development and school performance.

(i) The National Association for Sport and Physical Education cites nearly 200 studies on the effect of physical activity on learning, which show that physically fit children perform better academically.

(j) In 1997, the Institute of Medicine advised that pupils should receive the health-related education and services necessary for them to derive maximum benefit from their education and to enable them to become healthy, productive adults. Thus, the objectives of the Healthy People 2010 initiative of the United States Department of Health and Human Services include increasing the proportion of schools that provide health education to prevent several health problems, including education with respect to unhealthy dietary patterns and inadequate physical activity.

(k) There is a need for both a sequential physical education that involves moderate to vigorous physical activity and teaches knowledge, motor skills, and positive attitudes and activities that all pupils can enjoy and pursue throughout their lives that are taught by well-prepared and well-supported staff, as well as health education content standards that incorporate nutrition and physical activity concepts, laying the foundation for lifelong healthy habits.

SEC. 2. Section 51210.8 is added to the Education Code, to read:

51210.8. (a) On or before March 1, 2008, based on recommendations of the Superintendent, the State Board of Education shall adopt content standards in the curriculum area of health education.

(b) The content standards shall provide a framework for instruction that a school may offer in the curriculum area of health education. This section does not require a school to follow the content standards.

(c) The content standards described in subdivision (a) shall only be developed if sufficient funds from any source are made available for that purpose, including state, federal, or private sources.