

**Introduced by Senator Rubio
(Coauthor: Senator Umberg)**

February 20, 2025

An act to amend Section 51210 and 51220 of the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 531, as introduced, Rubio. Course of study: mental health education.

Existing law requires the adopted course of study for grades 1 to 6, inclusive, to include certain areas of study, including, among others, health. Existing law requires the adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive, to offer courses in specified areas of study, including, among others, English, social sciences, and mathematics.

This bill, with respect to the adopted course of study for grades 1 to 6, inclusive, would require the health area of study to also include mental health education, as provided. The bill, with respect to the adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive, would add mental health education, as provided, to the adopted course of study. To the extent this bill would impose additional duties on local educational agencies or local officials, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

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

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:
3 (1) Mental health is critical to overall health, well-being, and
4 academic success.
5 (2) Mental health challenges affect all age groups, races,
6 ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes.
7 (3) Millions of Californians, including at least one in five youths,
8 live with mental health challenges. Millions more are affected by
9 the mental health challenges of someone else, such as a close friend
10 or family member.
11 (4) Mental health education is one of the best ways to increase
12 awareness and the seeking of help, while reducing the stigma
13 associated with mental health challenges. The public education
14 system is the most efficient and effective setting for providing this
15 education to all youth.
16 (b) For the foregoing reasons, it is the intent of the Legislature
17 in enacting this measure to ensure that all California pupils in
18 grades 1 to 12, inclusive, have the opportunity to benefit from a
19 comprehensive mental health education.
20 SEC. 2. Section 51210 of the Education Code, as amended by
21 Section 1.5 of Chapter 658 of the Statutes of 2024, is amended to
22 read:
23 51210. (a) The adopted course of study for grades 1 to 6,
24 inclusive, shall include instruction, beginning in grade 1 and
25 continuing through grade 6, in the following areas of study:
26 (1) English, including knowledge of, and appreciation for,
27 literature and the language, as well as the skills of speaking,
28 reading, listening, spelling, handwriting, including instruction in
29 cursive or joined italics in the appropriate grade levels, and
30 composition.
31 (2) Mathematics, including concepts, operational skills, and
32 problem solving.
33 (3) Social sciences, drawing upon the disciplines of
34 anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science,
35 psychology, and sociology, designed to fit the maturity of the

pupils. Instruction shall provide a foundation for understanding the history, resources, development, and government of California and the United States of America; the development of the American economic system, including the role of the entrepreneur and labor; the relations of persons to their human and natural environment; eastern and western cultures and civilizations; contemporary issues; the wise use of natural resources; and the Spanish colonization of California and the Gold Rush Era, including the treatment and perspectives of Native Americans during those periods.

(4) Science, including the biological and physical aspects, with emphasis on the processes of experimental inquiry, on the place of humans in ecological systems, on the causes and effects of climate change, and on the methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Appropriate coursework including material on the causes and effects of climate change and methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change shall be offered to pupils as soon as possible, commencing no later than the 2024–25 school year.

(5) Visual and performing arts, including instruction in the subjects of dance, music, theater, and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression.

(6) Health, including instruction in the principles and practices of individual, family, and community ~~health~~. *health and including mental health education, including the instruction prescribed in Article 6 (commencing with Section 51925) of Chapter 5.5, including subdivisions (a) to (h), inclusive, of Section 51925.*

(7) Physical education, with emphasis upon the physical activities for the pupils that may be conducive to health and vigor of body and mind, for a total period of time of not less than 200 minutes each 10 schooldays, excluding recesses and the lunch period, except as provided in subdivision (c) of Section 51222.

(8) Other studies that the governing board may prescribe.

(b) (1) A complaint that a school district or county superintendent of schools has not complied with the instructional minute requirements of paragraph (7) of subdivision (a) may be filed with a school district or county superintendent of schools pursuant to the Uniform Complaint Procedures set forth in Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

(2) A complainant not satisfied with the decision of a school district or county superintendent of schools may appeal the decision to the department pursuant to Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 4600) of Division 1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations and shall receive a written appeal decision within 60 days of the department's receipt of the appeal.

(3) If a school district or county superintendent of schools finds merit in a complaint, or the Superintendent finds merit in an appeal, the school district or county superintendent of schools shall provide a remedy to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians.

(c) The Legislature finds and declares that neither the original provisions of this section, nor any subsequent amendments to it, were intended to create a private right of action. However, nothing in this subdivision shall restrict or expand the existing right of any party to seek relief from noncompliance with this section pursuant to a writ of mandate.

SEC. 3. Section 51220 of the Education Code, as amended by Section 1.5 of Chapter 810 of the Statutes of 2024, is amended to read:

51220. The adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive, shall offer courses in the following areas of study:

(a) English, including knowledge of and appreciation for literature, language, and composition, and the skills of reading, listening, and speaking.

(b) (1) Social sciences, drawing upon the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, and sociology, designed to fit the maturity of the pupils. Instruction shall provide a foundation for understanding the history, resources, development, and government of California and the United States of America; instruction in our American legal system, the operation of the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, and the rights and duties of citizens under the criminal and civil law and the State and Federal Constitutions; the development of the American economic system, including the role of the entrepreneur and labor; personal financial literacy; the relations of persons to their human and natural environment; eastern and western cultures and civilizations; human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust, and, to the extent instruction is provided on the Spanish colonization of California or the Gold Rush Era,

1 the treatment and perspectives of Native Americans during those
2 periods; and contemporary issues.

3 (2) For purposes of this subdivision, genocide may include the
4 Armenian Genocide. The “Armenian Genocide” means the torture,
5 starvation, and murder of 1,500,000 Armenians, which included
6 death marches into the Syrian desert, by the rulers of the Ottoman
7 Turkish Empire and the exile of more than 500,000 innocent people
8 during the period from 1915 to 1923, inclusive.

9 (c) World language or languages, beginning not later than grade
10 7, designed to develop a facility for understanding, speaking,
11 reading, and writing the particular language.

12 (d) Physical education, with emphasis given to physical activities
13 that are conducive to health and to vigor of body and mind, as
14 required by Section 51222.

15 (e) Science, including the physical and biological aspects, with
16 emphasis on basic concepts, theories, and processes of scientific
17 investigation, on the place of humans in ecological systems, on
18 the causes and effects of climate change, on the methods to mitigate
19 and adapt to climate change, and with appropriate applications of
20 the interrelation and interdependence of the sciences. Appropriate
21 coursework including material on the causes and effects of climate
22 change and methods to mitigate and adapt to climate change shall
23 be offered to pupils as soon as possible, commencing no later than
24 the 2024–25 school year.

25 (f) Mathematics, including instruction designed to develop
26 mathematical understandings, operational skills, and insight into
27 problem solving procedures.

28 (g) Visual and performing arts, including dance, music, theater,
29 and visual arts, with emphasis upon development of aesthetic
30 appreciation and the skills of creative expression.

31 (h) Applied arts, including instruction in the areas of consumer
32 education, family and consumer sciences education, industrial arts,
33 general business education, or general agriculture.

34 (i) Career technical education designed and conducted for the
35 purpose of preparing youth for gainful employment in the
36 occupations and in the numbers that are appropriate to the
37 personnel needs of the state and the community served and relevant
38 to the career desires and needs of the pupils.

39 (j) Automobile driver education, designed to develop a
40 knowledge of the Vehicle Code and other laws of this state relating

1 to the operation of motor vehicles, a proper acceptance of personal
2 responsibility in traffic, a true appreciation of the causes,
3 seriousness, and consequences of traffic accidents, and the
4 knowledge and attitudes necessary for the safe operation of motor
5 vehicles. A course in automobile driver education shall include
6 education in the safe operation of motorcycles.

7 *(k) Mental health education, including the instruction prescribed*
8 *in Article 6 (commencing with Section 51925) of Chapter 5.5,*
9 *including subdivisions (a) to (h), inclusive, of Section 51925.*

10 ~~(k)~~

11 *(l)* Other studies that the governing board may prescribe.

12 SEC. 4. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
13 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
14 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
15 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
16 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.