



2025 Policy Analysis of Laws, Governance, and Oversight of School-based Sport in the United States



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The landscape of school-based sport in the United States (U.S.) is undergoing significant changes. Increasing specialization, commercialization, and professionalization are reshaping the delivery of sport in schools, while concerns surrounding coach turnover, shortages of officials, athlete mental health, and health and safety challenges also are emerging. State-level policies are shifting and evolving to respond to growing risks related to athlete health and safety, rising demands and compliance needs, and the complexities of today's school-based sport system (e.g., athlete mental health concerns, name, image, likeness (NIL), etc.; Atkinson et al., 2022, 2024; Bates & Atkinson, 2024). Often state governance of school-based sport and related coach education is often confusing, out-of-date, and at times may be driven by levers not in the best interest of student-athletes (Baghurst, 2024). At the same time, efforts to expand or improve state-level laws and policies are hitting roadblocks. Implementation can not happen without costs, and leaders must consider how to track accountabilities while also ensuring policy changes do not result in more barriers to delivering youth sport or hiring coaches (Atkinson et al., 2022).

Despite these complex challenges, one must consider this value proposition: When policies strengthen coach education, training, and school-based sport oversight, the result is improved sport experiences, safer environments, and better developmental conditions for young people. Policy making, then, can lay the national groundwork for safer, higher-quality school-based sport environments that provide young people with developmental experiences to carry beyond sport into healthy adulthood. The examination of how states have structured and adapted their policies over the past several years helps us better understand the national policy landscape in school-based sport, especially regarding coaching. Additionally, opportunities exist to examine the facilitators of policy change and to identify what states have enacted exemplary legislation.

Since 2022, a comprehensive mapping of U.S. school-based sport coach education and training requirements has cataloged the regulations governing coach licensure, education, and training requirements in all 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.; Atkinson et al., 2022, 2024). This work has documented coach training requirements (e.g., concussion, first aid), the types of coaches covered under requirements (e.g., assistant, volunteer, middle school), and governance and oversight structures (e.g., State Department of Education, State Activities Association). In 2024, this mapping was replicated to capture changes in the policy landscape and provide a more nuanced analysis of trends shaping school-based sport across the country ([Atkinson et al, 2024](#)). Together, these analyses demonstrate how policy shifts are reshaping school-based sport and influencing the conditions under which coaches and youth sport participants engage.



While mapping coach training requirements provides a critical foundation, a more in-depth analysis of state-level laws regulating school-based sport is essential to fully capture and understand the U.S. policy landscape. This policy brief takes that next step, offering a closer examination of the content, scope, and implications of current requirements to better inform practice, policy, and future research guiding school-based sport. This expanded analysis answers several key questions:

- **Scope of Regulation:** How many laws govern school-based sport across the U.S., and how many policies are in place within each state?
- **Policy Location and Structure:** In what locations (education, health, etc.) do these laws “live” and what patterns emerge in states where laws are distributed across multiple government agencies?
- **Coach Education and Training Requirements:** What school-based sport coach education and training requirements have changed since the previous mappings done in 2020 and 2024?
- **Depth in Coach Training Requirements:** Drawing on indicators of depth in coach training requirements, how many states meet different levels of enacted policy across pathways such as basic safety, health, and pedagogy?
- **Exemplar Legislation:** Which states have enacted laws outlining comprehensive education and training for coaches?
- **School-Based Sport Failed Legislation:** What bills and policy initiatives have failed in the last 5 years? On what topics and in which states?
- **Consistency Across Youth and School-based Sport:** How many states have passed legislation aligning policy for both school- and community-based youth sport, seeking to set uniform statewide standards?
- **Leadership and Partisanship:** Who has been instrumental in advancing effective legislation, and to what extent is school-based sport a bipartisan issue?

Through this current analysis, our goal is to provide an updated, in-depth examination of how school-based sport laws and policies are evolving, offering actionable insights to inform national efforts in creating safe, developmentally appropriate environments for youth sport participants.

Methods

Bills and laws from all 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) were coded using key topics outlined in the Youth Sports and Physical Activity Legislation Tracker created by the University of Washington (UW) Sports Institute in Medicine, the Center for Leadership in Athletics, and the King County Play Equity Coalition, and done in partnership with the Susan



Crown Exchange and LiFEsports at The Ohio State University. Using the Tracker's initial school-based sport topics as a guide, we categorized and charted five main sections, including (a) title and numeric code of each bill or law, (b) content targeted, (c) status (e.g., passed, pending, or failed), (d) location (e.g., education, health, etc.) and policy structure (e.g., establishment and governance), and (e) legislative sponsors. This coding allowed numerous questions in this analysis to be examined and trends and patterns to be identified.

Additionally, public documents outlining coach education training requirements were retrieved from the websites of State Activities Associations and Departments of Education for each of the 50 states and D.C. ($N = 51$). As done in Atkinson et al. (2022, 2024), we coded each state's school coach education and training requirements based on key factors initially outlined in the National Coaching Report conducted by National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 2008). The five main sections charted included (a) the establishment and governance of requirements; (b) state-specific training requirements; (c) the mode of delivery for training; (d) variations in training requirements based on coaching role; and (e) the logistics of training requirements.

Importantly when reading this brief, it is important to draw attention to the nuances of legislation (e.g., laws) and policy implementation (e.g., practice). Although bills and laws establish broad parameters guiding school-based sport, they do not always spell out the exact details of what coaches must complete in terms of education and training. Instead, state legislatures often pass laws that identify key topics such as concussion safety, cardiac arrest preparedness, mental health, or background checks without specifying how those requirements are to be operationalized.

At the implementation level, the responsibility for setting and enforcing the details of the laws frequently falls to State Activities Associations (e.g., high school athletic associations) or State Departments of Education. These bodies interpret the laws and determine the specific training modules, certification processes, and/or continuing education requirements governing school-based sport. For example, a law may broadly state that coaches need to be trained in "health and safety" or "sport-specific skills," but the association or department decides what curriculum counts, whether the training is offered online or in-person, how often trainings must be renewed for licensure, which coaching roles the law applies to, and what sanctions and/or penalties ensue when schools and/or coaches are not in compliance.

Because of this division between law-making and creation (establishment) and execution or rule-setting/oversight (governance), discrepancies can emerge. In many states, the laws are



broad, but the state governing body may go further by mandating additional training. This layered establishment and governance structure highlights why examining both state legislation (e.g., laws) and publicly available documents from governing bodies (e.g., requirements) were essential to analyze in this brief. One provides the framework, the other dictates the practice. Attention to this differentiation also was part of our analysis.

Scope of Regulation

Across all 50 states and D.C., there are 124 laws governing school-based sport. The average number of laws per state averages around two laws ($M = 2.39$; $SD = 1.30$). Additionally, the number of state laws passed varies widely, with West Virginia having the most (6 laws), followed by Virginia, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, and California (5 each). Moreover, 14 states have only one law passed related to school-based sport (Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, South Carolina, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). Table 1 provides an overview of the number of laws by state.

Policy Location and Structure

After cataloging the number of laws, an analysis was done to examine where laws are housed (i.e., where they “live”) and how they operate within state policy structures. The results also are presented in Table 1. As mentioned previously, one entity may be responsible for establishing a law, while another may be responsible for governance. For example, a Department of Education may create the requirements established in a law related to concussion training for coaches. However, the State Athletic Association may be tasked with enforcing that requirement, such as choosing the concussion course and/or enacting sanctions in cases of non-compliance. The following definitions help to actualize these roles within the school-based sport policy landscape.

- **Establishment (Policy creation):** The development and adoption of the legal or regulatory framework that shapes school-based sport. Establishment identifies who creates the laws. This is often done by state legislatures, boards of education, or departments of education.
- **Governance (Policy execution):** The implementation and enforcement of those laws and requirements. Governance identifies who ensures the laws are carried out, such as state high school athletic associations, local school districts, or other designated authorities, by monitoring compliance, overseeing training, and translating policy into practice.



Location

Findings from this analysis demonstrate how state laws governing school-based sport are often not concentrated in a single system but instead overseen by different state agencies and codified within various statutes. The implication here is that the “location” of the laws serves as an important factor in how they are created, implemented, and monitored. When examining the different locations regarding where these laws “live,” or are codified into statutes, the following trends emerged:

- **Education:** The majority (94 out of 124; 76%) of laws are codified in statutes housed in state Departments of Education or education-related entities.
- **Health:** 25 out of 124 (20%) laws are codified in statutes located in state Health Departments often related to medical clearance, concussion management, and/or physical health requirements.
- **Other:** 5 laws (4%) are codified in other locations (e.g., Title 6: Civil practice; Title XXX: Occupations and professions; Title 2A: administration of civil and criminal justice, etc.)
- **Multiple locations:** 15 states have school-based sport laws codified in multiple locations, including education and health. This intersection highlights the complexity of determining *where* school-based sport laws “live” to support health, safety, and education-based compliance.

Structure

A key dimension of the school-based sport policy landscape also is whether the same entity is responsible for both establishing and governing laws, or whether these functions are split across multiple bodies. An analysis of state structures reveals that a majority of the states ($n = 35$) maintain continuity, with the same entity both creating and governing school-based sport policy. In contrast, several states, including D.C. ($n = 16$), operate under divided systems where one body establishes laws and another enforces them. This distinction is important, as it may shape how policies are applied, how accountability is maintained, and how advocates may encounter various facilitators and/or barriers when seeking to advance policy initiatives.



Matching Establishment & Governance (same entity creates and executes laws)

- In total, 35 states have structural alignment across who establishes and governs school-based sport laws
 - 25 states have alignment across State Activities Associations: Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin
 - 6 states have alignment across Departments of Education: Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Utah
 - 4 states have alignment across other entities: Iowa (Board of Educational Examiners), Maine (Principals' Association), Vermont (Principals' Association), Wyoming (Professional Teaching Standards Board)

Non-Matching Establishment & Governance (different entities create and execute laws)

- In total, 16 states do not have structural alignment in who establishes and governs school-based sport laws (see Table 1)
 - 13 states are established by Departments of Education and laws are executed by State Activities Association: Arizona, Arkansas, California, D.C., Kentucky, Nevada, New Mexico, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, Washington (*Note: Minnesota's is called the State High School League*)
 - 3 states are established by Departments of Education and laws are executed by School Districts: Florida, Maryland, North Carolina


Table 1. *Number of Laws Per State and Location/State Structure of Governance*

State (Total Number of Laws)	Location				Structure	
	Education	Health	Other	Multiple Locations	Establishment (Policy Creation)	Governance (Policy Execution)
Alabama (4)	0	3	1	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Alaska (3)	2	1	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Arizona (1)	1	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Arkansas (2)	2	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
California (5)	3	2	0	✓	State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Colorado (3)	2	1	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Connecticut (1)	1	0	0		State Department of Education	State Department of Education
Delaware (1)	0	1	0		State Department of Education	State Department of Education
District of Columbia (2)	1	1	0	✓	State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Florida (2)	2	0	1		State Department of Education	School Districts
Georgia (2)	2	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association



State (Total Number of Laws)	Location				Structure	
	Education	Health	Other	Multiple Locations	Establishment (Policy Creation)	Governance (Policy Execution)
Hawaii (1)	0	1	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Idaho (1)	1	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Illinois (1)	0	1	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Indiana (1)	1	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Iowa (1)	1	0	0		Board of Educational Examiners	Board of Educational Examiners
Kansas (1)	1	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Kentucky (2)	2	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Louisiana (3)	3	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Maine (2)	2	0	0		State Principals' Association	State Principals' Association
Maryland (3)	3	0	0		State Department of Education	School Districts
Massachusetts (3)	1	2	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association



State (Total Number of Laws)	Location				Structure	
	Education	Health	Other	Multiple Locations	Establishment (Policy Creation)	Governance (Policy Execution)
Michigan (2)	1	1	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Minnesota (3)	3	0	0		State Department of Education	Minnesota State High School League
Mississippi (2)	1	1	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Missouri (2)	1	1	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Montana (2)	2	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Nebraska (1)	0	1	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Nevada (3)	2	1	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
New Hampshire (3)	2	0	1	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
New Jersey (5)	4	0	1	✓	State Department of Education	State Department of Education
New Mexico (2)	2	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
New York (3)	2	1	0	✓	State Department of Education	State Department of Education



State (Total Number of Laws)	Location				Structure	
	Education	Health	Other	Multiple Locations	Establishment (Policy Creation)	Governance (Policy Execution)
North Carolina (3)	3	0	0		State Department of Education	School Districts
North Dakota (2)	2	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Ohio (5)	3	2	0	✓	State Department of Education	State Department of Education
Oklahoma (3)	3	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Oregon (2)	1	0	1	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Pennsylvania (2)	2	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Rhode Island (2)	2	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
South Carolina (1)	1	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
South Dakota (2)	2	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Tennessee (5)	2	3	0	✓	State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Texas (3)	3	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association



State (Total Number of Laws)	Location				Structure	
	Education	Health	Other	Multiple Locations	Establishment (Policy Creation)	Governance (Policy Execution)
Utah (1)	0	1	0		State Department of Education	State Department of Education
Vermont (2)	2	0	0		State Principals' Association	State Principals' Association
Virginia (5)	5	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
Washington (4)	4	0	0		State Department of Education	State Activities Association
West Virginia (6)	6	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Wisconsin (1)	1	0	0		State Activities Association	State Activities Association
Wyoming (1)	1	0	0		Professional Teaching Standards Board	Professional Teaching Standards Board
Total (124)	94	25	5	15	See text summary	See text summary

Note: Establishment is the entity that decides the laws; governance is the entity that executes the laws.



Changes in Training Requirements Since 2024

Since our last report in 2024 (Atkinson et al., 2024), several states have taken additional steps to strengthen coach training requirements, particularly in the areas of health, safety, and oversight. While much of the policy landscape remains consistent with prior years, several notable shifts were identified in training mandates and background check provisions. Specifically, more states now require education on state rules, sport-specific content, sudden cardiac arrest, and heat illness. Additionally, several states have clarified or expanded the requirements for BCI/FBI background checks. Table 2 provides a side-by-side comparison of policy requirements across 2020, 2024, and 2025, highlighting both continuity and areas of change. A more specific breakdown of changes by state is described next.

Regarding legislation specific to health and safety, six states (Delaware, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and North Dakota) have added training on sudden cardiac arrest. Two states (Kentucky, South Dakota) now include training on heat illness/acclimatization, and one more state (Massachusetts) has added training on mental health as part of its coaching licensure process. Furthermore, we are seeing continual progress in safeguarding school sports, as three more states (Florida, Maryland, New Mexico) require coaches to complete training prior to the start date, and two states (California, Illinois) now require middle school coaches to meet the same training requirements as high school coaches.

Notably, understanding what is stated in the law as compared to what is required as part of the coach licensure/certification process is complex. In some instances, alignment exists between the law and the coach training/education requirements. For example, in Ohio, Lindsay's Law (§ 3707.59) mandates that coaches receive education on sudden cardiac arrest risks and as a result, the Ohio Department of Education requires coaches to complete training on sudden cardiac arrest to be licensed as a school-based coach. In contrast, many states require coaches to complete training/education on pedagogy, such as the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) *Fundamentals of Coaching* or Human Kinetics' *Principles of Coaching*. However, only California (§ 35179.1) and Texas (§ 75.205) have laws that specifically mandate the establishment of a coaching education program that covers a range of topics and coaching pedagogy. Table 2, therefore, summarizes the practices utilized to comply with the laws, but may also extend beyond what is written in the laws.

This complexity also exists within school-based sport policy regarding background checks. Broader educational policy in states (and D.C.) requires background checks for school employees and/or any personnel working with students. For example, most statutes read



“all school employees,” “individuals employed by or under contract with a school district,” or “personnel with unsupervised contact with students,” rather than naming “coaches” explicitly. In other words, because school-based coaches are typically employees of or contracted by school districts, they fall under these requirements and are subsumed by these policies as school employees. The emergent concern, however, is that coaches not officially hired, paid, and/or those volunteering do not fall under these legislative requirements. As such, there are instances when a coach may not be paid, yet still coach in a school setting, which requires a nuanced interpretation of the law. For instance, data from the National Coach Survey (Bates & Anderson-Butcher, 2022) demonstrate that 11% of school-based coaches report being unpaid volunteers. Therefore, this subset of coaches would not fall under the broader school policy requirements and not technically be required to complete a background check within the scope of most existing laws governing coach training requirements.

As presented in Table 2, only 29 of 51 jurisdictions (57%, including D.C.) explicitly state that background checks/fingerprinting are required to coach, whereas five states (Colorado, Florida, Maine, New Hampshire, Tennessee) have laws related to background checks/fingerprinting that explicitly reference “coaches.” As evidenced in the nuance above, most states conduct background checks within existing educational policy frameworks, but gaps likely exist in ensuring all coaches (even unpaid volunteers) have been cleared. Despite this, the good news is that more states (California, Florida, Wisconsin) have added policies to ensure background checks/fingerprinting are completed prior to coaching.

Regarding other training requirements outside of health and safety, the updated mapping demonstrates an increase in the number of states requiring alternative and/or additional training for coaches. Specifically, three states now require school-based coaches to complete training on state-specific rules outlined by the State Activities Association (Idaho, North Carolina, Oklahoma), seven added training requirements related to sport-specific knowledge (Colorado, District of Columbia, Idaho, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Montana, Virginia) so coaches must complete training in the sport they are coaching (e.g., soccer, football, etc.), one state now requires bullying and hazing (Arizona), and another state requires training in human relations (Nebraska).


Table 2. *Synthesis of Training Requirements and Related Contextual Factors*

Training Requirements and Contextual Factors	2020	2024	2025	Changes Since 2024	% Change Since 2024
Establishment & Governance					
State Activities Association	24 (47%)	25 (49%)	25 (49%)	Same	No change
Department of Education	4 (8%)	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	Same	No change
Combination of Entities	18 (35%)	16 (31%)	16 (31%)	Same	No change
Other Entity	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	Same	No change
Adjustments to Licensure Process					
Adjustments Present	33 (65%)	30 (59%)	30 (59%)	Same	No change
Training Requirements					
Health-Related Training					
First Aid/CPR	47 (92%)	48 (94%)	48 (94%)	Same	No change
Concussion	51 (100%)	51 (100%)	51 (100%)	Same	No change
Sudden Cardiac Arrest	29 (57%)	34 (67%)	40 (78%)	6 more states	+11%
Heat Illness/Acclimatization	17 (33%)	22 (43%)	24 (47%)	2 more states	+4%
Mental Health/Suicide Prevention		7 (14%)	8 (16%)	1 more state	+2%
Pedagogy-Related Training					
Fundamentals of Coaching	39 (76%)	33 (65%)	33 (65%)	Same	No change
Alternative Course	9 (18%)	16 (31%)	16 (31%)	Same	No change
None/School District	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	2 (4%)	Same	No change
Alternative Training					
State Specific Rules	28 (55%)	33 (65%)	36 (71%)	3 more states	+6%
Sport Specific Knowledge	14 (27%)	14 (27%)	21 (41%)	7 more states	+14%
Additional Trainings	9 (18%)	16 (31%)	21 (41%)	5 more states	+10%



Training Requirements and Contextual Factors	2020	2024	2025	Changes Since 2024	% Change Since 2024
Legislative					
Background	26 (51%)	26 (51%)	29 (57%)	3 more states	+6%
Checks/Fingerprinting					
Child Abuse Recognition	8 (16%)	9 (18%)	9 (18%)	Same	No change
Method of Delivery					
Online	33 (65%)	34 (67%)	34 (67%)	Same	No change
In-Person	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	Same	No change
Both Options	12 (24%)	14 (27%)	14 (27%)	Same	No change
Requirements of Head Coach Extended to Other Coaching Roles					
High School Assistant	43 (84%)	45 (88%)	45 (88%)	Same	No change
High School Volunteer	35 (68%)	35 (68%)	35 (68%)	Same	No change
Middle School Coach	19 (37%)	23 (45%)	25 (50%)	2 more states	+5%
Logistics					
Timeframe to Complete Required Trainings					
Prior to Coaching Start Date	32 (63%)	35 (69%)	38 (75%)	3 more states	+6%
Additional Time Provided	15 (30%)	10 (20%)	10 (20%)	Same	No change
Incentives					
Incentives Provided	5 (10%)	8 (16%)	8 (16%)	Same	No change
Did Not Specify/Incentives Not Provided	46 (90%)	43 (84%)	43 (84%)	Same	No change



Depth in Coach Training Requirements

Another way to examine the content of training requirements by state involves mapping laws according to key areas of compliance, starting with minimal safety requirements (e.g., background checks/fingerprinting, safety) and proceeding to broader ones that require specific knowledge, skills, and coaching competencies. Opportunities herein exist to examine the depth of legislation and the level of oversight in areas such as safety, health, abuse prevention/mandatory reporting, mental health/suicide prevention, positive youth development (e.g., building relationships, focusing on mastery), and pedagogy (e.g., sport-specific knowledge).

Table 3 outlines the laws instituted by each state and categorizes them according to four levels aligned with trends guiding school-based sport. Essentially, these levels were created to serve as a guide for informing sport leaders and policymakers about opportunities to take a “pulse check” on their alignment between laws and practices (e.g., those mapped in Table 2).

- **Level 1:** Legislation related to background checks/fingerprinting.
- **Level 2:** Basic health and safety legislation common to most states (e.g., concussion, sudden cardiac arrest).
- **Level 3:** Additional health and safety training with added specificity (e.g., heat illness/acclimatization, mental health/suicide prevention, child abuse and neglect).
- **Level 4:** Requirements related to more specific training, focusing on sport-specific knowledge, pedagogy, positive youth development, etc.

Our mapping found that 14 states have explicit laws that meet Level 1, 50 states and D.C. meet Level 2, 13 states meet Level 3, and only two states and D.C. meet Level 4. Notably, some states skip specific levels, such as Level 1, which may be due to their inclusion of coaches under their educational policies (e.g., contracted employees undergo background checks). Differences in laws related to coach training requirements outlined by each state are important to explore and can be explored further in Table 3.


Table 3. *Summary Table on Levels and Laws Related to Coach Training*

State	Laws	Content	Level
Alabama	§ 22-11E-2; § 22-11F-3; § 6-5-344	Civil liability; concussion; cardiac arrest; safety; heat illness	1, 2, 3
Alaska	§ 47.17.022; § 09.65.290; § 14.30.142	Civil liability; concussion; child abuse and neglect	1, 2, 3
Arizona	§ 15-341	Concussion	2
Arkansas	§ 6-18-710; § 6-18-721	Concussion; cardiac arrest; heat illness	2, 3
California	§ 33353; § 49475; § 124241; § 124235, § 35179.1	Background checks; general safety; concussion; cardiac arrest; sport knowledge; heat illness; educational philosophy; sport psychology; sport pedagogy; sport physiology; sport management; rules knowledge; goal setting	1, 2, 3, 4
Colorado	§ 26.5-4-403; § 25-43-103; § 26.5-4-402	Background checks; concussion; child abuse and neglect	1, 2, 3
Connecticut	§ 10-149b	Concussion	2
Delaware	§ 3006L	Concussion	2
District of Columbia (D.C.)	§ 7-2871.03; § 38-2661.24	Concussion; sport knowledge	2, 4
Florida	§ 943.0438; § 1006.20; § 1012.55	Background checks; concussion; cardiac arrest	1, 2
Georgia	§ 20-2-324.1; § 20-2-324.5	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Hawaii	Act 262	Concussion	2
Idaho	§ 33-1625	Concussion	2
Illinois	410 ILCS 145	Concussion	2
Indiana	§ 20-34-7-7	Concussion	2
Iowa	§ 280.13C	Concussion	2
Kansas	§ 72-7119	Concussion	2



State	Laws	Content	Level
Kentucky	§ 158.162; § 160.445	Concussion; cardiac arrest; heat illness, general safety	2, 3
Louisiana	§ 17:440.4; § 17:440.3	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Maine	§ 13026; § 254	Background checks; concussion	1, 2
Maryland	§ 7-433; § 7-434; § 7-436	Concussion, cardiac arrest, heat illness	2, 3
Massachusetts	Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010; Chapter 111 of the General Laws 2022	Concussion, mental health	2, 3
Michigan	§ 333.9155; § 380.1319	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Minnesota	§ 122A.58; § 122A.33; § 121A.37	Policies; concussion	1, 2
Mississippi	§ 37-24-7; § 41-60-33	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Missouri	§ 167.765; § 190.092	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2, 3
Montana	§ 20-7-1303	Concussion	2
Nebraska	§ 71-9104	Concussion	2
Nevada	§ 385B.080; § 450B.620	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
New Hampshire	§ 328-F:18-a; § 200:50; § 200:40-c	Background checks; concussion; cardiac arrest	1, 2
New Jersey	§ 2A:62A-6; § 18A:40-41.2; § 18A:40-41a; § 18A:11-3.10; § 18A:40-41b	Civil liability; general safety; concussion; cardiac arrest; safety; heat illness	1, 2, 3
New Mexico	§ 22-13-31.1; § 22-13-31.2	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
New York	§ 305; § 3001-B; § 3000-F	General safety; concussion; cardiac arrest	2
North Carolina	§ 115C-407.55; § 115C-12	Policies; concussion	1, 2
North Dakota	§ 15.1-18; § 15.1-02	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Ohio	§ 3319.303; § 3313.539; 3313.5318; § 3707.59; § 3701.851	Concussion; cardiac arrest; mental health	2, 3
Oklahoma	§70-24-155; §70-24-156; § 70-27-104	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2



State	Laws	Content	Level
Oregon	§ 336.485; § 417.875; § 418.696	Concussion	2
Pennsylvania	§ 5323	Concussion	2
Rhode Island	§ 16-11.1-1; § 16-91-3	General safety; concussion	2
South Carolina	§ 59-63-75	Concussion	2
South Dakota	§ 13-36-9; § 13-36-10	Concussion	2
Tennessee	§ 49-6-3601; § 68-55-502; § 49-6-3601; § 68-6-103; § 68-6-202	Background checks; concussion; cardiac arrest	1, 2
Texas	§ 38.158; § 22.902; § 75.205	Policies; concussion; cardiac arrest; Coaching philosophies, sport psychology, pedagogy, physiology, management, legal compliance, character development, student-athlete role modeling	1, 2, 3, 4
Utah	§ 26-53-201	Concussion	2
Vermont	§ 1431; § 1480	Concussion; cardiac arrest	2
Virginia	§ 22.1-271.5; § 22.1-271.8; § 22.1-271.9; § 22.1-271.10	Concussion; cardiac arrest; heat illness	2, 3
Washington	§ 28A.600.200; § 28A.600.190; § 28A.600.192; § 28A.600.195	Policies; concussion; cardiac arrest	1, 2
West Virginia	§ 18-2-25; § 18A-3-2a; § 18-2-25a; § 18-5-22e; § 18-2-25b	Policies; concussion; cardiac arrest	1, 2
Wisconsin	§ 118.293	Concussion	2
Wyoming	§ 21-2-202	Concussion	2



Exemplar Legislation

Notably, California and Texas have the most comprehensive set of laws in the nation, spanning all four levels of coach training requirements and demonstrating how legislation can move beyond minimum health and safety mandates to include broader areas such as coaching philosophy, sport psychology, pedagogy, and professional development. Additional details on the content within these laws are highlighted as brief case examples below.

Case Example: California High School Coaching Education and Training Program

In January 2023, the California Legislature proposed an amendment to an existing education code in response to an urgent and growing need for comprehensive coach training, driven by rising participation rates in interscholastic athletics. As outlined in the actual legislation, sponsorship was rooted in both demand and safety: the explosion of girls' athletics, overall increases in student participation, and widespread calls from principals, superintendents, and school board members for stronger coaching preparation (see California Education Code §35179.1). At the time, at least 25,000 coaches annually required training to meet even the most basic safety standards, highlighting a clear policy gap (see California Education Code §35179.1). This amendment was passed in October 2023 and now requires a comprehensive approach to coach training in the state of California. Details of what the law requires are noted next.

Exemplar Legislation: Comprehensive Approach to Coach Training

California Education Code § 35179.1 outlines that California's coach training program must emphasize:

1. Coaching Philosophies
 - Alignment of coaching philosophies with school and district goals, ensuring values-based and consistent approaches across athletics.
2. Sport Psychology & Pedagogy
 - Communication, motivation, and understanding how student-athletes learn, reinforcing the educational role of coaching.
3. Sport Physiology & Athlete Health
 - Training principles, nutrition, and risks of performance-enhancing substances, reflecting adolescent developmental needs.
4. Sport Management & Risk Management
 - The coach's dual role as an educator, team, program, and risk manager within the context of the school.



5. Safety & Emergency Preparedness
 - CPR, AED use, and first aid, along with training on concussions, heat illness, and, by July 1, 2024, cardiac arrest recognition and response.
6. Compliance
 - Knowledge of statewide and school regulations, including gender equity and non-discrimination policies, is required.
7. Planning & Goal Setting
 - Planning and goal-setting practices.

This legislation is exemplary because it balances safety, pedagogy, management, health/mental health, and compliance, showing what it means to think comprehensively about coach education. Rather than endorsing a single program, the law creates a framework that can evolve and accommodate adaptations. By weaving together athlete well-being, school alignment, and evidence-based health and safety standards, California set a legislative precedent for states seeking to professionalize coaching while protecting and empowering student-athletes. Read the full law here: [California Education Code § 35179.1 \(2024\) :: 2024 California Code :: U.S. Codes and Statutes :: U.S. Law :: Justia](#)

Case Example: Texas Coaching Education Program

In 2003, the Texas Legislature recognized the critical role coaches play in shaping both athletic and educational outcomes. Responding to the rapid growth of youth and interscholastic sports and heightened concerns about safety, the legislature enacted Senate Bill 1127, which established the foundation for a statewide coach education program. This law, codified as Texas Education Code §75.205, tasked the San Antonio Life Sciences Institute, in partnership with The University of Texas at San Antonio and The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, with developing and delivering a coaching education program. Legislators cited not only the increasing participation in high school sports but also the growing complexity of health, safety, and legal responsibilities for coaches. By creating a statewide mandate, Texas emphasized the importance of professional preparation, ensuring that coaching moved beyond volunteerism toward a structured, educationally grounded role in schools.



Exemplar Legislation: Statewide Coaching Education Program

Texas Education Code §75.205 mandates that the program cover a comprehensive array of topics, preparing coaches to meet the demands of modern school athletics, including:

1. Coaching Philosophies & Alignment
 - Encouraging consistency with school values and educational missions, reinforcing the coach's role as both educator and mentor.
2. Sport Pedagogy & Motivation
 - Training in how students learn, strategies for communication, and methods to support motivation, teamwork, and positive youth development.
3. Health & Sport Physiology
 - Instruction in conditioning principles, nutrition, and the prevention of overuse injuries, reflecting adolescent developmental needs.
4. Risk Management & Program Leadership
 - Understanding the coach's dual role in managing teams and safeguarding participants through responsible program oversight.
5. Safety & Emergency Response
 - Requiring training in first aid, CPR, AED use, concussion recognition, and other life-saving interventions, addressing both everyday risks and emergencies.
6. Compliance & Ethical Responsibilities
 - Ensuring knowledge of statewide regulations, gender equity mandates, and nondiscrimination policies, strengthening accountability within school programs.

Texas' approach set a national precedent by institutionalizing coach training through a partnership between higher education and secondary schools. The law balances safety, pedagogy, management, and compliance while embedding training within a research-driven university institute. This model ensures that coach education evolves with best practices, health standards, and the shifting needs of student-athletes. Rather than treating coaching as an extracurricular add-on, Texas was the first to implement legislation that frames coaching and coach education as an integral educational role, underscoring the responsibility of schools to provide safe, inclusive, and developmental athletic experiences. By linking statewide standards to higher education expertise, Texas created a durable, scalable framework that other states can emulate in professionalizing the field of coaching while protecting and empowering student-athletes. Read the full law here:

<https://law.justia.com/codes/texas/education-code/title-3/subtitle-c/chapter-75/subchapter-c/section-75-205/>



School-Based Sport Failed Legislation

While mapping school-based sport laws, an analysis was conducted on proposed bills of which had failed in the last five years. Overall, trends demonstrate how a several states had sudden cardiac arrest/AED bills fail, followed by others with general safety/abuse bills, concussion, and those related to mental health and eating disorders failing. A specific breakdown of the bills by state and category is outlined in the following. Notably, several of these legislative actions sought to amend and/or expand existing laws, which explains why states may already have concussion policies in place, yet also appear as having a failed bill on the same topic. Although an explicit analysis of how bills functioned as amendments was not conducted, each state and bill are included to capture legislative activity. Additionally, some bills may not have made it out of a state-level committees and are not represented here.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest/AED/Cardiac Emergency Response

In total, 13 states, 15 bills failed on sudden cardiac arrest/AED/emergency response.

- Arizona HB 2196 (2025)
- Hawaii HB 2604 (2024); HB 267 (2025)
- Idaho HB 60 (2025)
- Indiana SB 500 (2025)
- Minnesota SF 1457 (2025)
- Mississippi HB 1548 (2024)
- Nebraska LB 1391 (2023); LB 463 (2025)
- Oregon SB 910 (2025)
- Rhode Island HB 5423 (2025)
- South Carolina HB 3831 (2025); HB 3576 (2025)
- Wisconsin AB 347 (2023)
- Missouri HB 232 (2025)

General Safety/Abuse/Eligibility

In total, 6 states had 7 bills fail on broader governance/safety/abuse policies.

- Idaho HB 410 (2025) – background checks for coaches
- Kentucky HB 396 (2023) – eligibility governance
- Maryland HB 1393 (2025) – youth sports safety, abuse prevention
- Michigan HB 6019 (2024) – comprehensive safety act (abuse, concussion, cardiac, coaching standards)



- Oklahoma HB 2088 (2025) – extracurricular eligibility
- Oklahoma SB 1472 (2024) – youth coach safety training
- Rhode Island HB 8151 (2022) – substance abuse education

Concussion/Brain Injury

In total, 4 states had 6 bills failed on concussion management.

- Iowa HB 858 (2025)
- Maryland HB 552 (2018); HB 453 (2020); HB 1393 (2025)
- South Carolina HB 4298 (2025)
- Texas HB 4223 (2023)

Mental Health / Eating Disorders

In total, 1 state had 2 bills fail on mental health.

- Minnesota SF 3771 (2024) – eating disorder prevention
- Minnesota HF 61 (2025) – mental illness/suicide prevention training

Consistency Across Community-based and School-based Sport

While most state laws govern school-based sport, a subset of states have laws extending requirements into the broader youth sport landscape (e.g., community-based sport). These policies make expectations for health, safety, and coach preparation actionable not only within schools but also across community-based sport organizations. Table 4 summarizes examples from 16 states that have passed legislation aligning policy across school- and community-based youth sport, creating more uniform statewide standards. Notably, some states do not explicitly refer to 'youth sport' but instead use terms such as 'recreational facilities' utilized for youth sport. When interpreting these findings, please note how some laws may be missing from this list as they are housed in other places that were not identified in this policy analysis of school-based sport laws. However, this subset of policies provides several examples of how alignment can happen across the entire sport system in single states. Of interest is the pattern that when states align policy, oversight is almost always anchored in a state agency, typically the Department of Health or the Department/Board of Education (sometimes both).


Table 4. *States with Laws Aligning Policy Across School and Youth Sport Entities*

State	Law (Bill/Statute)	Year	Summary
Alabama	Youth Athletes & Concussions (HB 308 / § 22-11E-2)	2011	Requires concussion education, removal-from-play, and medical clearance for schools and youth sports organizations, creating shared baseline protocols.
California	Youth Sports Concussion & SCA Protocols (AB 2007 / § 124235)	2015	Mandates annual concussion education and coach training, removal/return-to-play, and SCA protocols for both school and non-school youth sports.
Colorado	Jake Snakenberg Youth Sports Concussion Act (SB11-040 / § 25-43-103); Youth Sports Personnel Safety (HB24-1080 / § 26.5-4-403); Abuse Prevention Training (SB24-113 / § 26.5-4-402)	2011; 2024	Concussion standards for school athletics plus statewide background checks/CPR and abuse-prevention training for youth sports organizations, aligning expectations across settings.
Delaware	Concussion Protection in Youth Athletic Activities Act (HB 404 / § 3006L)	2015	Requires coach/official training and policies for schools and non-school youth athletic organizations under common state standards.
Hawaii	Concussion / TBI Advisory & Education (Act 262 / § 321-28)	2016	Establishes statewide concussion education, removal/clearance expectations that apply to school and youth sports for consistent practice.
Illinois	Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act (HB 200 / 410 ILCS 145)	2011	Requires education, removal/clearance, and coach training across schools and youth sports programs, creating uniform return-to-play rules.
Louisiana	Youth Concussion Act (SB 189 / § 17:440.4)	2011	Mandates concussion education, removal from play, and medical clearance for students, parents, and coaches in school and youth sports organizations.



State	Law (Bill/Statute)	Year	Summary
Michigan	Youth Concussion Protection Act (SB 1122 / § 333.9155)	2012	Requires public education materials and statewide concussion-awareness and management training/programs for schools and youth sports, harmonizing protocols.
Minnesota	Youth Athletes Concussion Policies (SF 612 / § 121A.37)	2011	Sets statewide concussion management (education, removal, clearance) for schools and youth sports programs, unifying standards.
Mississippi	Mississippi Youth Concussion Law (HB 48 / § 37-24-7)	2014	Establishes concussion education and management expectations that extend to student-athletes and coaching personnel across school and youth settings.
Montana	Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes (Revised) (HB 487 / § 20-7-1303)	2017	Expands concussion law to nonpublic schools and youth athletic organizations, aligning training, removal, and clearance standards statewide.
Ohio	Lindsay's Law (Sudden Cardiac Arrest) (HB 252 / § 3707.59)	2015	Requires SCA education and annual coach training; applies to youth athletes, parents, and coaches in school and community programs, aligning SCA protocols.
Oregon	Youth Concussion Training & Restrictions (SB 1547 / § 417.875)	2018	Requires concussion training and return-to-play rules recognized across school and non-school youth athletics by expanding qualified medical clearers.
Rhode Island	School & Youth Programs Concussion Act (HB 7036/5440/7367 / § 16-91-3)	2010	Statewide concussion education, coach training, removal, and medical clearance rules for schools and youth programs, explicitly covering both.



State	Law (Bill/Statute)	Year	Summary
Tennessee	Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act (SB 985 / § 68-6-103)	2015	Mandates SCA education/training, removal/return-to-play, and enforcement for schools and youth sports organizations, creating uniform standards.
Virginia	Concussion Guidelines for Student-Athletes (HB 410 / § 22.1-271.5)	2014	Requires non-interscholastic youth sports using school property to adopt policies aligned with local school division/Board of Education concussion guidelines—explicit alignment mechanism.



Leadership and Partisanship

The advancement of school-based sport legislation is shaped not only by the content of the laws but also by the political leadership and coalitions behind them. The examination of the 124 passed and eight pending bills tracked here revealed important insights into the role of bipartisanship in shaping policy. While many laws passed address urgent issues such as concussion management, sudden cardiac arrest, and broader safety standards, the level of bipartisan support varies considerably across topics and states. Overall, data suggest that sport safety has frequently transcended party lines, particularly around concussion management and cardiac arrest legislation. In these cases, broad bipartisan sponsorship is evident across much of the country (defined as having at least one Democrat, one Republican or Independent sponsor). The following section highlights the extent of bipartisan engagement as it relates to specific bills passed or pending within school-based sport.

In an analysis of 132 passed or pending school-based sport laws:

- 66 bills were introduced with bipartisan sponsors; 33 bills introduced solely by Democratic sponsors; 22 bills introduced solely by Republican sponsors; 8 introduced by committees or State Boards; 3 unable to identify sponsors
- When examining how many states had bills with bipartisan sponsors, 35 states and D.C. (36 of 51) introduced bipartisan bills related to school-based sport.
- The specific breakdown of the sponsors from each political party as it relates to the 132 bills passed or pending is documented in Table 5, along with a breakdown of sponsors from each party on specific legislation related to mental health, cardiac arrest, concussion, abuse, and background checks. For example, 20 Democrats and 17 Republicans across the U.S. have served as sponsors on bills related to mental health to change the school-based sport policy context.

Table 5. *Summary of Party Sponsors on Laws Passed or Pending in School-based Sport*

Category	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
School-Based Sport Topic			
Mental Health	20	17	0
Cardiac Arrest	197	138	0
Concussion	405	322	1
Abuse	105	20	0
Background checks	40	4	0
Total	758	491	1



Summary and Implications

In summary, there are many complexities associated with legislative oversight of school-based sport and coach training requirements in the U.S. Our analysis found 124 different laws governing school-based sport across the 50 states and D.C. (with an average of two laws per state). Some states, such as West Virginia and Ohio, have five or more laws, with 14 states having one law focused primarily on concussion management. The majority of laws are housed and codified into education statutes (76%), with others in health (20%). Interestingly, 16 states do not have structural alignment across the entity that establishes and executes laws as it relates to the roles of Departments of Education and the State Activities Association, adding further complexities related to the school-based sport policy landscape. One wonders whether oversight by Departments of Education and/or State Activities Associations is conducive to the most effective oversight of school-based sport policy.

On a positive note, more states have strengthened legislation related to coach training requirements in the past few years since the last mapping in 2024 (with 8 bills pending). To summarize advancements in requirements:

- Sudden cardiac arrest education (6 more states; 40 total);
- Heat illness/acclimatization education (2 more; 24 total);
- Mental health training (1 more; 8 total);
- State-specific rules governing sport (3 more; 36 total);
- Sport-specific knowledge education (7 more; 21 total);
- Background checks and fingerprinting (3 more; 29 total);
- Additional training requirements in areas such as unified sports and drug/steroid prevention (2 more; 21 total).
- Completion of training prior to the start date of coaching (3 more states; 38 total); and
- Middle school coaches included in requirements (2 more; 25 total).

Additionally, other legislative activity during the past five years showcases the number of bills proposed and/or amended but did not pass. Specifically:

- 13 states have had 15 bills fail related to cardiac arrest/AED/emergency response;
- 6 states had 7 bills fail on governance/safety/abuse policies like background checks/fingerprinting and abuse prevention;
- 4 states had 6 bills fail on concussion management; and
- 1 state had 2 bills fail on mental health (e.g., suicide prevention, eating disorders).



Together, bills proposed and passed demonstrate promising trends related to increased governance in coach training, particularly in relation to health and safety. Those that have failed also have centered on health and safety, but more so sought to expand requirements related to abuse and mental health.

This analysis then mapped state laws across varying levels of compliance (e.g., background checks – Level 1; Concussion and cardiac arrest – Level 2, etc.). The overall mapping of laws by levels showcased how most states have legislation on the books related to health and safety, with all states having laws regarding concussion management (Level 2). However, when diving deeper into how this analysis of laws related to training requirements, there was a notable mismatch between state laws and the training requirements at the implementation level. Very few states have laws referencing pedagogy or broader coaching competencies, yet many State Activities Associations require coaches to complete pedagogy-based trainings such as *Fundamentals of Coaching* or similar coursework. From one perspective, this emphasis may strengthen coach competencies by ensuring exposure to developmental, instructional, and relational content beyond safety and compliance. Yet, there also is an unspoken tension in that these trainings often serve as revenue generators for State Activities Associations, with many states receiving a percentage return from course fees through partnerships with national entities. This creates a dual implication. On one hand, such training can enhance coaching practice and provide sustainable funding for governing bodies. On the other hand, reliance on cost-recovery models may incentivize requirements that do not always align with best practices. This tension underscores the need to examine whether mismatches in laws and what is done in practice are what is best for coach training and school-based sport more broadly and not driven by fiscal considerations alone.

Other findings from this analysis reveal additional opportunities for enhancing legislation by revising current school-based sport legislation. Foremost, expanding coach training requirements to include Level 1 (background checks) is a necessity, while also pushing for health and safety requirements that extend beyond solely concussion management (e.g., Level 3). Many do not require coaches to receive training on pedagogy as written in their laws but do in practice by adding to their coach training requirements through courses such as NFHS' *Fundamentals of Coaching*. This is promising and shows the field's commitment to educational best practices, even in the absence of formal legal mandates. California and Texas stood out as exceptions, as their laws explicitly incorporated pedagogy, coaching philosophy, and related competencies, creating a more comprehensive statutory framework. These statutes suggest a vision of coaching as an educational profession with standards tied to a mission of education-based athletics. Importantly, they



also demonstrate how legislation can be used as a lever to elevate the quality of coach preparation and ultimately youth sport experiences.

California and Texas' laws also point toward opportunities to streamline legislation and consolidate multiple existing laws into a single statute or amend existing laws to merge or expand upon provisions and reduce complexities. Another example comes from Ohio when the state passed a law requiring mental health training for coaches. While this mental health legislation was being passed, it brought forth another opportunity to better streamline renewal processes of specific health and safety training (e.g., in 2021 concussion training had to be renewed every 3 years and first aid/CPR every 2 years; Bates & Anderson-Butcher, 2022). Now, concussion and first aid/CPR training are on the same renewal cycle (e.g., every time a coach renews their coaching permit). Together, these cases illustrate how states can use new and/or amended legislation not only to address emerging issues, but also to simplify and align existing requirements in ways that reduce administrative burden and perhaps help better match policy creation to execution.

One area of concern is unpaid volunteer coaches may fall “under the radar” when it comes to background checks/fingerprinting. Currently, only 57% of states have explicit coach training requirements that outline background checks/fingerprinting for coaches in school-based sport, and even fewer laws specifically identify “coaches” as the individuals subject to these checks. While most education policies mandate background checks/fingerprinting for school personnel or contracted employees, unpaid volunteers are not always covered under these provisions. In practice, many local education agencies complete checks for volunteers, but in many states, there is no explicit policy requiring it in the context of school sports. To better protect young people in sport, there is a need to assess how inconsistencies in laws and training requirements might miss this population of coaches and do more to vet these adults working with young people in our schools and communities.

When reflecting on background checks/fingerprinting, compliance is even more fragmented within community-based sport. Although this was not the primary focus of our analysis, examples from 16 states illustrate how policy can be aligned across both school- and community-based youth sport. Most alignment has occurred around concussion management, often codified within health statutes. However, continuity across the entire youth sport system remains limited. Tweaking school-based policies for coach training and exploring creative strategies, such as Virginia's approach of leveraging school property laws, may provide viable pathways for policymakers to build greater consistency across youth sport settings.



Interestingly, our mapping also showcased how many of the 132 passed and/or pending laws and bills (66 in total) were introduced with bipartisan support. This suggests that sport may serve as a unique policy arena where leaders from both parties can find common ground, collaborating to strengthen legislation that prioritizes the health, safety, and development of young people. At the same time, one must consider how failed policies and a lack of bipartisan support may signal deeper disagreements about centralized versus decentralized approaches to governance, as well as concerns about the costs associated with implementation (e.g., passing AED training requirements when schools cannot afford the equipment). These tensions highlight the practical and political challenges of advancing school-based sport policy, reminding us that while sport can be a unifying issue, the pathways to reform are often shaped by questions of resources, oversight, and feasibility.

When looking forward, considering the laws that have passed and failed, future laws may look to use the National Coaching Standards (Gano-Overway et al., 2021) as a guiding framework to meet the levels that were created to inform sport leaders and policymakers about alignment between laws and practices. For example, under the subcategory of Develop a Safe Sport Environment, Standard 13 reads “collaborate with program directors to fulfill all legal responsibilities and risk management procedures associated with coaching” (Overway et al., 2021). This aligns well with Level 1: Legislation related to background checks/fingerprinting. Another example could be within the subcategory of Conduct Practices and Prepare for Competition, Standard 26 reads “Plan practice to incorporate appropriate competition strategies, tactics, and scouting information. This standard would align well with Level 4: Requirements related to more specific training, focusing on sport-specific knowledge and pedagogy, as well as positive youth development.

These analyses are not without limitations. Combing through all laws, amendments, and training requirements across states is a tedious and complex task, particularly given the variation in how statutes are housed (e.g., education, health, civil codes) and the multiple entities that oversee their implementation. As such, this brief does not claim to capture every nuance of state policy. Rather, it provides a broad overview of the landscape and highlights the fragmented and often disjointed ways in which school-based sport policy is currently structured and enacted. These findings underscore both the progress made and the opportunities that remain for more coordinated, equitable, and child-centered policy approaches. Further, this policy brief does not include an analysis of each state’s bylaws for their respective high school athletic associations or other governing bodies. These documents often contain critical details regarding the implementation of coach education, safety, and health requirements. Without this level of review, the brief may not fully capture variations in enforcement, compliance mechanisms, or contextual factors that influence how policies are applied in practice across states.



In closing, this 2025 mapping update reflects the current state of school-based policy related to coach training in the U.S., showing some positive movement in relation to health and safety for student-athletes. Findings can inform state leaders, policymakers, and sport leaders as they work to improve the overall governance structure for sport in the U.S.



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