
SENATE BILL 5952

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Senators Wellman, Nobles, and C. Wilson

Prefiled 12/29/25. Read first time 01/12/26. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to standardizing the process for waiving physical
2 education requirements for high school students; amending RCW
3 28A.230.050 and 28A.210.365; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature strongly believes in
6 the importance of health and fitness instruction and a well-rounded
7 education as it is one of the primary goals of basic education
8 identified in RCW 28A.150.210.

9 (2) The legislature acknowledges that state law has allowed
10 individual high school students to be excused from participating in
11 physical education for certain reasons and good cause. The
12 legislature further acknowledges that the waiver process from
13 physical education requirements is based on local policy and
14 procedure and can vary widely between school districts. The
15 legislature finds that this variation between school districts leads
16 to confusion and inequitable flexibility for high school students.

17 (3) The legislature intends to standardize the process for
18 excusing high school students from participating in physical
19 education, which will lead to more equitable access to this wavier
20 for high school students throughout the state.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.050 and 2006 c 263 s 416 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 (1) All high schools of the state shall emphasize the work of
4 physical education, and carry into effect all physical education
5 requirements established by rule of the superintendent of public
6 instruction (~~(: PROVIDED, That individual~~)) and in accordance with
7 this section.

8 (2) Individual high school students may be excused from
9 participating in physical education otherwise required under this
10 section on account of physical disability, employment, or religious
11 belief, (~~(or)~~) because of participation in directed athletics or
12 military science and tactics, or for other good cause.

13 (3) By December 1, 2026, the Washington state school directors'
14 association, in consultation with the office of the superintendent of
15 public instruction and the state board of education, shall develop a
16 standardized process, including a template form, for excusing
17 individual high school students from participating in physical
18 education in accordance with state law. This process must be based
19 upon addressing health and physical education learning standards and
20 include alternative means of engaging in physical activities, as
21 directed in RCW 28A.210.365, and mastery-based credit allowable under
22 RCW 28A.230.090.

23 (4) By August 1, 2027, school districts shall adopt the
24 standardized process and use the form developed under this section.

25 (5) This section governs school operation and management under
26 RCW 28A.710.040 and 28A.715.020 and applies to charter schools
27 established under chapter 28A.710 RCW and state-tribal education
28 compact schools subject to chapter 28A.715 RCW to the same extent as
29 it applies to school districts.

30 **Sec. 3.** RCW 28A.210.365 and 2007 c 5 s 5 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 It is the goal of Washington state to ensure that:

33 (1) By 2010, all K-12 districts have school health advisory
34 committees that advise school administration and school board members
35 on policies, environmental changes, and programs needed to support
36 healthy food choice and physical activity and childhood fitness.
37 Districts shall include school nurses or other school personnel as
38 advisory committee members.

1 (2) By 2010, only healthy food and beverages provided by schools
2 during school hours or for school-sponsored activities shall be
3 available on school campuses. Minimum standards for available food
4 and beverages, except food served as part of a United States
5 department of agriculture meal program, are:

6 (a) Not more than thirty-five percent of its total calories shall
7 be from fat. This restriction does not apply to nuts, nut butters,
8 seeds, eggs, fresh or dried fruits, vegetables that have not been
9 deep-fried, legumes, reduced-fat cheese, part-skim cheese, nonfat
10 dairy products, or low-fat dairy products;

11 (b) Not more than ten percent of its total calories shall be from
12 saturated fat. This restriction does not apply to eggs, reduced-fat
13 cheese, part-skim cheese, nonfat dairy products, or low-fat dairy
14 products;

15 (c) Not more than thirty-five percent of its total weight or
16 fifteen grams per food item shall be composed of sugar, including
17 naturally occurring and added sugar. This restriction does not apply
18 to the availability of fresh or dried fruits and vegetables that have
19 not been deep-fried; and

20 (d) The standards for food and beverages in this subsection do
21 not apply to:

22 (i) Low-fat and nonfat flavored milk with up to thirty grams of
23 sugar per serving;

24 (ii) Nonfat or low-fat rice or soy beverages; or

25 (iii) One hundred percent fruit or vegetable juice.

26 (3) By 2010, all students in grades one through eight should have
27 at least one hundred fifty minutes of quality physical education
28 every week.

29 (4) By 2010, all student health and fitness instruction shall be
30 conducted by appropriately certified instructors.

31 (5) (~~Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, any~~) Any
32 district waiver or exemption policy from physical education
33 requirements for high school students under RCW 28A.230.050 should be
34 based upon meeting both health and fitness curricula concepts as well
35 as alternative means of engaging in physical activity, but should
36 acknowledge students' interest in pursuing their academic interests.

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