
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5113 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING POOL SAFETY AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes and phases in statewide safety standards for public school swimming pools when being used for physical education classes, interscholastic activities, or extracurricular activities (i.e., student aquatic activities). The bill applies to any pool a school board approves for such activities.

For the school year starting July 1, 2013, the bill requires that, in addition to the person conducting student aquatic activities at a school pool, at least one qualified educator, swimming coach, or lifeguard must be present to monitor swimmers who may be in distress and to help them, when necessary.

For all school years, starting July 1, 2014, the bill prohibits school boards from offering any physical education course or extracurricular activities, or permitting students to participate in interscholastic activities, at a school pool unless certain qualified attendants, as specified in the bill, are present. By July 1, 2014, it requires all school boards offering such courses or activities at a school pool to adopt a pool safety plan ensuring compliance with the bill.

*House Amendment "A" replaces the underlying bill, which established qualifications for school swimming coaches and instructors and required at least one person to be present to monitor school pools for swimmers in distress, and changes the effective date from October 1, 2013 to July 1, 2013.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

POOL SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL YEAR STARTING JULY 1, 2013

For the school year starting July 1, 2013, the bill requires that, in addition to the person responsible for conducting any student aquatic activity at a school pool, at least one qualified educator, swimming coach, or lifeguard must be present. The additional person must be solely responsible for monitoring the pool for swimmers who may be in distress and helping them, when necessary.

Qualified Swimming Coach and Qualified Educator

Under the bill, a “qualified swimming coach” is someone who holds a valid coaching permit issued by the State Board of Education (SBE). A “qualified educator” is someone who (1) holds a valid SBE certificate, with an endorsement in physical education; (2) is state-certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); and (3) has completed a first aid course offered by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, the Department of Public Health, or any director of health.

Both the coach and educator must also:

1. be certified as lifeguards by the American Red Cross or another nationally recognized organization that conducts aquatic training programs,
2. complete a safety training course for swim coaches and instructors offered by the American Red Cross or an SBE-approved organization, or
3. be certified as lifeguards for at least five of the previous 10 years and have at least five years’ experience as a swimming coach or an instructor of a physical education course that makes use of a school swimming pool.

Qualified Lifeguard

The bill defines a “qualified lifeguard” as anyone who (1) is age 16 or older; (2) is certified as a lifeguard by the American Red Cross or another nationally recognized organization that conducts aquatic training programs; (3) is certified in CPR under state law; and (4) has completed a first aid course offered by the American Red Cross,

American Heart Association, Department of Public Health, or any health director.

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY PLAN

The bill requires local and regional school boards that offer student aquatic activities to adopt, by July 1, 2014, a pool safety plan that ensures compliance with the bill and review and update the plan as necessary before the start of each school year. The plan must also include any other provisions deemed necessary and appropriate for ensuring the safety of students who use school pools for aquatic activities.

POOL SAFETY STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL YEAR STARTING JULY 1, 2014

For school years, starting July 1, 2014, the bill prohibits local or regional school boards from allowing students to participate in any interscholastic athletic activity, or offering any extracurricular activity or physical education course, at a school pool unless certain qualified individuals are present while the activities are taking place. It sets separate requirements for the different activities.

In the case of interscholastic activity, there must be at least one qualified swimming coach who coaches the participating students and is responsible for implementing the school swimming pool safety plan. Additionally, at least one qualified educator, swimming coach, or lifeguard must be present whose primary responsibility is to monitor the pool for students in distress and provide help when necessary.

In the case of extracurricular activity, at least one qualified lifeguard must monitor the pool for swimmers who may be in distress and provide assistance to them when necessary. He or she must be responsible for implementing the provisions of the pool safety plan.

In the case of a physical education course, there must be at least one qualified educator who serves as the course instructor and at least one other educator, swimming coach, or lifeguard whose primary responsibility is to monitor the pool for swimmers in distress and provide assistance, if necessary. The course instructor is responsible for

implementing the pool safety plan.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/19/2013)