



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

# LegisBrief

A QUICK LOOK INTO IMPORTANT ISSUES OF THE DAY

JUL 2017 | VOL. 25, NO. 28



## Relaxing School Sunscreen Restrictions

BY JOELLEN KRALIK

Although preventable, skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Evidence shows that even one blistering sunburn during childhood or adolescence can nearly double a person's chance of developing melanoma, and the American Academy of Dermatology recommends that children, especially, should be protected from the sun. The CDC advises [applying sunscreen](#) every time a child goes outside.

The most recent data from the CDC's School Health Policies and Practices Survey (SHPPS) reveals that almost half of all U.S. schools allow time for students to apply sunscreen at school, but in general, sun safety practices are not common. Sunscreen is considered an

[over-the-counter drug](#) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and many school policies require physician authorization for students to be given such medications.

Because children spend much of their days at school, state and federal lawmakers are looking for ways to incorporate sun protection policies and practices into schools.

### State Action

In response to growing concerns about sun protection for children, several states have enacted policies addressing student use of sunscreen at schools. So far in 2017 six states—Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Utah and Washington—have passed school sunscreen legislation. These six states join California, New York, Oregon and [Texas](#), for a total of 10 states addressing the issue in statute.

**New Mexico has consistently included shade structures for specific schools as part of its capital expenditure bills.**

